LETTERS OF GEORGE MEREDITH

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

HIS SON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

1844-1881

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George Meredith
at the age of three
from an oil painting

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PREFACE

The Letters of George Meredith here brought together have been printed first and foremost for his friends, and this fact must explain whatsoever may appear illogical, superfluous, and maybe obscure in this book. The collection is not meant to form a narrative of his life, nor indeed does it profess to be complete. Many of his intimate friends, and a large number of his letters to them, do not for various reasons appear at all here. Very few letters, for instance, of the many written to Cotter Morison are available, the majority having been most unfortunately destroyed. Those written to Lionel Robinson, to Stephen Hamilton, and to Maurice Fitzgerald, if any indeed exist, are inaccessible, and few letters to Arthur Cecil Blunt and many others can be found. To the friends of his later years his letters were always rare: thus none appear to Lord Haldane, though a frequent visitor to Flint Cottage, and hardly any exist to John Deverell, a friend of long standing and one of his executors, or to Colonel and Mrs. Lewin.

Many a close friendship indeed does not appear at all in these volumes, and I wish for this reason to note here one or two among them. My father's obligations, for instance, to Miss Louisa and Miss Mary Lawrence were very great: their home in Whitehall

Place, the rendezvous of many people eminent in literature and science, was always open to him. The same is true in regard to Mrs. Drummond of Fredley, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Jameson, and Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Plimmer, at whose house many of his happiest later days were spent. Very gratefully to be remembered are Mrs. Christopher Wilson and Sir Trevor and Lady Lawrence.

I have further to express my sincere thanks to all those who have so readily placed at my disposition the bulk of the letters printed in these volumes. To my friends J. M. Barrie, Thomas Seccombe, and Edward Hutton I am indebted for much advice and assistance.

W. M. M.

1912.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LETTERS OF GEORGE MEREDITH

THE first ancestor of George Meredith of whom we have any record, his great-grandfather John Meredith, was living in Portsea in the middle of the eighteenth century, and there in the parish church, his son Melchizedek (or Melchisedec, the name is variously spelt) was baptized in June 1763.

Melchizedek Meredith early in life became a tailor and naval outfitter, his shop being at No. 73 High Street, Portsmouth. He was a remarkable and a very handsome man, and his business soon became the leading one of its kind in the great naval port.[1] But his ambitions were not limited to his shop: he was on friendly terms with many of his customers, who probably included all the famous sailors of that great period, and was a welcome guest in some of the best houses of the neighbourhood. While still quite a young man he had married a woman as remarkable, it would seem, as himself: her name, her Christian name, for we are at present ignorant of her family, which belonged to the professional class, was Anne; she was ten years older than her husband, but like him tall and very handsome. They were, in fact, a notable couple. In 'The Great Mel' and Mrs. Mel of *Evan Harrington* we have their portraits, the only literal family portraits, let it be noted, in the book.

Melchizedek Meredith, whose fine presence and manners won him universal popularity, especially with women, was used to take his pleasures abroad, it would appear, to the

[1] It is referred to by Captain Marryat in *Peter Simple*, vol. ii. chap. vi.: 'We called at Meredith's the Tailor, and he promised that by the next morning we should be fitted complete.'

neglect of his business and his family, especially in his later years. He kept horses and hunted, was a member of a local Freemasons' lodge, and joined the Portsmouth Yeomanry in the capacity of an officer at the time of the threatened invasion of Napoleon. In 1801, and again in 1803-4, he was a churchwarden of his parish church of St. Thomas, to which in the latter year he and his fellow-warden presented a set of silver plate.

In 1814 Melchizedek died, leaving behind him a large family, of which those who chiefly interest us are: his eldest son Augustus, who succeeded him in the business, and four daughters—all beautiful girls—Anne Eliza, who in 1809 married Thomas Burbey, a Portsmouth banker; Louisa, who in 1811 married John Read, Consul-General for the Azores, later a knight of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and Sword; Harriet, who in the same year married John Hellyer, a brewer; and Catherine Matilda, who in 1819 married Samuel Burdon Ellis, then a lieutenant in the Royal Reserves, and who later became General and Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath.

Augustus Armstrong Meredith was born in 1797 and christened Gustave Urmston, which was later changed, and the change is noted in the register, to Augustus Armstrong. He seems to have been somewhat wild and extravagant and, though he had business ability, to have spent money faster than he made it. He married about 1824 Jane (Eliza) Macnamara, daughter of Michael Macnamara of The Point, Portsmouth. The only child of this marriage was George Meredith, born February 12, 1828, at 73 High Street, Portsmouth, and baptized on April 9th in the church of St. Thomas, seven months before the death of his grandmother.

Mrs. Augustus Meredith died when her son was five years old; and the business having apparently gone to pieces after the death of Mrs. Mel, Augustus, at some time after 1837, migrated to London, where, however, he was no more successful than he had been in Portsmouth, and later proceeded to the Cape, whence he returned to spend the

last ten years or so of his life in Southsea, where he died in 1876.

The young George Meredith, on his father's departure for London, remained in Portsmouth, where he went to school. His mother's small fortune was left in the hands of trustees for him. Later he became a ward in Chancery, the trust-money having, for the most part, disappeared. His chief recollection of this time seems to have been the three dreary church services he attended on Sunday, when, during the sermon, he would invent tales in the manner of St. George and the Dragon, or of the kind found in the *Arabian Nights*, of which he was very fond, and which came to such fruition later in the *Shaving of Shagpat*. At the school in Portsmouth he learned, he said, little or nothing, and it was not till at the age of fourteen he was sent to Neuwied that his education, at any rate his literary education, may be said to have begun.

The Moravian school at Neuwied, on the Rhine, near Cologne, was founded in 1750. In the first fifty years of its existence its pupils for the most part came from Switzerland. Later many German boys entered the school, but the years from 1831 to 1842 are known in the school as the English period, nearly a hundred and fifty English boys being sent to the school in that decade. Among them was George Meredith, who entered the school on August 18, 1842. He remained there without returning home for two years, and from this time we may date his first and most vivid and lasting impressions of the Rhine, which bore fruit later in *Farina*. The religious influence of the place upon his young mind would seem to have been, as indeed he confessed, profound, to which the following letter bears witness.

A 'Leaving Letter' written to a Schoolfellow

To R. M. Hill.

Neuwied, *July* 8, 1844.

My dear Hill,—During the time that we 've lived together, one feeling, whether in union, or shall I say

enmity, no that is too harsh, has agitated our respective bosoms. It is fellowship. O may God grant that all may have the same feeling towards you to make your life happy. But true fellowship is not to be had without Christianity; not the name but the practice of it. I wish you the greatest of all things 'God's blessing,' which comprehends all I would or could otherwise say.—Yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

It was at the age of sixteen, upon January 7, 1844, that Meredith left school, returned to London, and in due course was articled to Mr. R. S. Charnock, F.S.A., a solicitor with chambers at 10 Godliman Street, E.C. For the law he had no taste, his income was very small and irregular, and he frequently lived at this time on a single bowl of porridge a day; reading widely in the classics, and giving himself to the study of German literature. Long walks through the market gardens of Chelsea into Surrey and Middlesex were his recreation. To Literature as a career he turned naturally, seeing in it the means for the expression of his love of nature, his philosophy of life, and perhaps—though this weighed least with him—a source of livelihood. Charnock was not only an antiquary, he was also a man of literary tastes and gifts, and his circle of friends included many of the young writers and artists of the time. Largely under his auspices there was started, by a little literary coterie about the year 1848, a MS. magazine named the *Monthly Observer*, to which articles and drawings were contributed. Each member of the society interested in it took his or her turn as editor, and each number was circulated among the members for criticism. Among the contributors to this magazine were Austin Daniel, Hilaire de Ste. Croix, R. G. Snell, R. S. Charnock, Edward Peacock, and his sister Mrs. Nicolls, son and daughter of Thomas Love Peacock. It was in the *Monthly Observer* that George Meredith's first published poem 'Chillianwallah' appeared in manuscript in 1849, and in the same year was printed in *Chambers's Journal* (July 7).

At Edward Peacock's rooms in London George Meredith was a frequent visitor, and it was as his guest that he first met Peacock's sister, Mrs. Mary Ellen Nicolls, widow of Lieutenant Edward Nicolls, who commanded H.M.S. *Dwarf* and was lost at sea with his ship. Mrs. Nicolls was a woman of considerable beauty, great intelligence, some literary achievement, and brilliant and irrepressible wit. She had one child, Edith. George Meredith when he first met her was but twenty-one years of age; he was very poor, he had finally cut himself adrift from the law, and it is doubtful whether he had kept in touch with his family; certainly he did not look to them for assistance. On August 9, 1849, Meredith and Mrs. Nicolls were married.

The next few years were spent chiefly on the Continent at the expense of a small legacy from a Portsmouth relative. On his return to England, journalism, poetry, the *Shaving of Shagpat* and the planning of *Richard Feverel* occupied his time. He and his wife had no settled home. For some time they boarded at The Limes, Weybridge, the house of Mrs. Macirone, a woman of considerable culture. There they met Frith the artist, who was also boarding there, and there Meredith made many of his early literary friends, among them Sir Alexander and Lady Duff Gordon and their children, who were then lodging in another cottage hard by, and to whom he was introduced by Tom Taylor. Here too he met R. H. Horne.

To R. H. Horne.[1]

TO R. H. H. WITH DAPHNE [2]

That you will take the meaning of this verse
I know, deep-hearted friend and earnest man,
Poet! and thro' the simple picture see
The winged fancy rising from the flower!

[1] Richard Henry [or Hengist] Horne, 1803-1884, journalist, friend and correspondent of Mrs. Browning, and author of *Orion* (1843), critical essays entitled *A New Spirit of the Age* (1844), etc.

[2] 'Daphne,' first published in *Poems*, 1851

Too delicate for me to touch, or do
Aught but suggest; send forth as Nature sends
The unfettered insects fluttering with delight
Thro' the long warm blue summer's day and folded
At eve behind some rainy leaf, while the woods
Sing wet with Tempest—On its wings alone
Let it depend when once the warm-fingered sun
Has touched it into life—Enough for me
To paint the flower in all its natural hues
And plant it; this done, its fate is with the sky.
But you will know how in these after days,
First love still follows the fair, fleeting shape!
From the flush'd morning wave and woodland valley
Urging its wild pursuit, still in vain
Swift Nature lends her forces, still in vain
The old prophetic trees wave overhead—
Ah! happy he whose last inspired desire
Conquering its anguish shall have power to pluck
The never-fading laurel! Round his brows
Sweet Beauty hovers and a dawning gleam
Wakes ever on the leaves, for they are steep'd
I' the springs of day, and therefore do we mark
This strange foreshadowed crown of poet love,
The crown of poet passion. Thus to you
I dedicate, and in your hands I place
Daphne, the darling of my own first love.
So take her, part in friendship, but indeed
Chiefly a tribute to the noble lyre
Which sang of the giant bright whose starry limbs
Still scale the midnight Heavens and plant aloft
Heroic footsteps up untravelled space!
Live long and wear that constellated wreath.

Later Meredith and his wife were at other lodgings in Weybridge, in Felixstowe, and very frequently at Seaford, near

their friends the brothers Fitzgerald. It was, however, at the house of Thomas Love Peacock [1] at Lower Halliford, on June 11, 1853, that a son was born to them, whom they named Arthur Gryffydd.

Two highly strung temperaments, man and wife—each imaginative, emotional, quick to anger, cuttingly satirical in dispute, each an incomparable wielder of the [illegible] of [illegible]—could not find domestic content within the narrow bounds of poverty and lodgings. In 1858 came [illegible], with the result that George Meredith with his infant boy went to live in London, thence to a cottage in Esher village, and later to Copsham Cottage, between Esher and Oxshott. Mrs. Meredith returned to Weybridge, where she died at Grotto Cottage, Oatlands Park, in 1861.

To John W. Parker.[2]

WEYBRIDGE, *Dec.* 12, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR,—I send you a Selection of Poems completed, and a List of others from which I intend selecting for the projected volume. Of the latter I prize the 'Cassandra' [3] as my best work, but it is not yet finished. The 'Shipwreck of Idomeneus' is blank verse and 17 pages. The rest, with exception of one or two of the ballads, are ready. Of the Poems I forward you, I wish to have your opinion as early as you can give it. If you think the specimens I forward you inferior to the requirements of the age, 'not saleable' and so forth, I shall very likely be content to abide by your decision for a time. Mr. Horne speaks very favourably of those he has seen, but he has only seen the classical Poem and a few others,

[1] There are no letters to be found [illegible] Thomas Love Peacock but, though George Meredith [illegible] immediately before his marriage with Mrs. Nicolls, warm friendship, and on George Meredith's part admiration, existed between them.

[2] Of John W. Parker and Son, booksellers and publishers, West Strand, London.

[3] 'Cassandra' did not appear in this volume, but in *Modern Love*, 1862.

and consequently insists on Ballads and modern ingredients which I have endeavoured since then to supply. 'Sorrows and Joys,' 'The Two Blackbirds,' 'Infancy and Age'[1] are a selection from those published in 'Household Words.' The two 'blank verse metres' beginning 'How sweet on sunny afternoons' are selections from half a dozen of the sort, and will be, I think, the most original features in the volume. Also 'London by Lamplight' has two or more numbers to follow (but shorter ones), if you think fit. Besides these I am writing a Ballad for *Household Words*, which I think will be liked. I will tell you the subject when I see you. You will see that in the rape of Aurora I have followed the idea of Ariosto and inserted a little mythology—the union of the Sun and the Dawn—and in 'Daphne' I have avoided mention of 'Dan Cupid.' I have other 'Pictures of the Rhine,' but I thought six enough.

Thus far then I have explained the Contents of the parcel, which as soon as you can peruse, do, and let me know your opinions thereon and thereafter, when I will have the pleasure of calling on you and consulting as to the birth and baptism of my firstborn of the Muse.

To Eyre Crowe.[2]

SEAFORD, SUSSEX.

MY DEAR CROWE,—Will you come down here to us

[1] Not reprinted. A number of further poems in *Household Words* are attributed to Meredith by Mr. Matz (*T.P.'s Weekly*, Feb. 17, 1911). Except in the case of those already reprinted, proof is only forthcoming in the case of 'Monmouth' and 'Infancy and Age.' That in the case of many contributions to *Household Words*, Meredith lent his help to Horne and to Wills, as well as to his wife, there is little doubt. That the influence of his already marked style should be seen is not surprising; readers of many of the items attributed to him by Mr. Matz will, however, find little resemblance to the work of Meredith even in his very early youth.

[2] Eyre Crowe, A.R.A., born 1824, son of Eyre Evans Crowe, the historian. He published two volumes on Thackeray.

to-morrow? We shall be glad to have you. Come and stay a week. The weather is lovely. The heat quite sweltering. Come, and if you like, bring the Boulogne Fish-fays to give a truthful representation of nature. I should prefer you coming now, as I may not be here much longer, and the presence of the illustrious Francboise(y) is desirable. Mrs. Meredith joins in kind regards. She says you must come under pain of her displeasure. Come, O Crowe! Here is fishing, bathing, rowing, sailing, lounging, running, pic-nicing, and a cook who builds a basis of strength to make us equal to all these superhuman efforts. So Come!

There is a train at ten A.M. first and second class, the latter costs to Newhaven 9s. 8d. In the evening there is one at 6 P.M. with a Third Class, the latter being 5s. 11d. It reaches Newhaven at ½ past 8. From Newhaven to Seaford is a walk of two miles. If you walk, go on to the Hotel at Newhaven, anyone will direct you the way. You can go on the train. I may perhaps meet you; but on second thoughts this is unlikely as I may be over the hills at a pic-nic. But I shall be at home by the time you arrive. Let no excuse delay, and trust me.—Anticipatingly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Edward Chapman.[1]

SEAFORD, SUSSEX, *Dec.* 15, 1856.

MY DEAR MR. CHAPMAN,—Will you send me, this week, the £25 for which I made application, to sum the £70 requested in advance, and so doing oblige your faithful poet. . . .

I remain here, as I can work better than elsewhere, though, engaged as I am, the DULNESS is something

[1] Of Chapman and Hall, publishers, Piccadilly, London.

frightful, and hangs on my shoulders like Sinbad's old man of the Sea. I dream of Boltons, I promise myself a visit there at Christmas, just for a beguilement; but it is doubtful if I shall quit hard work for a day, till the book is finished. I will come Manuscript in hand. Tell Mrs. Chapman how much I should wish to see her; and Serious Meta, daughter of the Sage; also frolicsome Florence; not forgetting Reginald, the Roysterer.

The name of this novel is to be 'The Fair Frankincense.' Tell me what you think of it?—There are to be two Prophets in the book, and altogether a new kind of villain; being Humbug active—a great gun likely to make a noise, if I prime him properly.

Have you, or do any of your people know of, a book of Hampshire Dialect? I have a Sussex. Ballads, or Songs, with the provincialisms will serve. Perhaps Mr. Frederick Chapman may know of such a thing? Also a slang Dictionary, or book of the same with Gloss. And if you have, or can get these, will you forward them by post?

Mrs. Meredith is staying at Blackheath. Don't wait to send by her, as I am anxious she should spend Xmas in town. Dulness will put out the wax lights, increase the weight of the pudding, toughen the turkey, make lead of the beef, turn the entire feast into a nightmare, down here, to one not head and heel at work. . . .

I am glad 'Aurora Leigh' is so well received. I have not read it, but the extracts promise. Confirm to me the news of Bailey's[1] pension. Will that £100 per ann. chain him to earth, or only give him firmer spring into the empyrean! I should like to spin on the talk; but the paper contracts, and the Grave Man of business frowns already at four pages of it. So farewell.

[1] Author of *Festus*.

To W. C. Bennett.[1]

SEAFORD, SUSSEX, *April* 27, 1857.

SIR,—I have to thank you for your latest volume of poems: and in doing so, I must beg your excuse for omitting to acknowledge a previous single piece forwarded to me, and which I discover in the present collection. It is usual in such cases to say what we do like; but I presume a sufficient largeness in you to hear both.

I like your songs, and baby ballad very much. I like your feeling for English scenery, and remarkable descriptive power. I do not like your idylls (e.g. the 'Boat race') because both the form, the matter, and the blank verse, recall Tennyson so strongly, and one expects more than imitations from you. By the way, the giving of a daughter to the conqueror in a Boat race is, if British, not customary. A girl might give herself; but for a Papa so to stipulate implies unpleasant paternal contempt for the lover's physique, and a sort of calculation seldom made, I fancy. You see I speak freely.

It seems to me that your taste is not for what you succeed in best, viz. minute description, and there you might produce a first rate Dutch home story in ten eight line, or say, six-line verse; but I am passing my boundary in affecting to advise, and must honestly ask you to pardon me for the impertinence.

When at Weybridge the Merediths first made the acquaintance of Sir Alexander and Lady Duff Gordon, and their children, Maurice, Urania and Janet; and at their house Tom Taylor, Kinglake, Mrs. Norton, J. E. Millais, G. F. Watts,

[1] Author of many volumes of verse between 1850 and 1885. A collected edition of his poems appeared in 1862 in Routledge's 'British Poets.' The volume here acknowledged would appear to be *Queen Eleanor's Vengeance and Other Poems* (1857).

and many other artists and men of letters were frequent visitors.[1] When Meredith left the neighbourhood his friends lost sight of him. On his return to Esher he found the Duff Gordons settled between Esher and Oxshott, and he himself went, soon after, to Copsham Cottage close by. Janet Duff Gordon and Edith Nicolls were playfellows at Weybridge, and tell how, as small children, Meredith enthralled them by wild fairy-tales which he spun for their edification. In so far as Meredith ever drew his characters direct from life, Janet Duff Gordon was his model for Rose Jocelyn in *Evan Harrington*, whilst her father and mother are pictured as Sir Frank and Lady Jocelyn.

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon.

SCHUBERT'S FAREWELL[2]

The Pines are darkly swaying :
The skies are ashen-grey :
I mock my soul delaying
The word I have to say.
As if above it thundered
That we, who are one heart,
Should now for aye be sundered,
My passion bids me part :
I dare not basely languish,
Nor press your lips to mine ;
But with one cry of anguish,
My darling I resign.

Our dreams we two must smother :
The bitter truth is here :

[1] See *The Fourth Generation*, by Janet Ross (London, Constable and Co., 1912); also the same author's *Three Generations of Englishwomen* (London, John Murray, 1888).
[2] Words written to Schubert's 'Addio' and given to Janet Duff Gordon.

The hand is for another,
Which I have held so dear!
To pray that at the altar,
You may be bless'd above,
Ah, help me, if I falter,
And keep me true to love!
But once, but once, look kindly—
Once clasp me with your spell:
Let joy and pain meet blindly,
And throb our dumb Farewell.

At Copsham, as previously at Weybridge and Seaford, a frequent companion was Maurice Fitzgerald, who owned property at the latter place. He was one of the earliest to recognise Meredith's powers. Nephew to Edward Fitzgerald, he was a student of literature, an accomplished classical scholar, and an epicure. He is suggested by Adrian Harley in *Richard Feverel.* Sir Francis Burnand in his *Records and Reminiscences* gives an interesting description of Meredith as he first met him in company with Fitzgerald at Copsham.

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon.

'Fitz [1] goes about with a volume of Francatelli [2] in his hand. Thus we have colloquized.'

FITZ. 'Oyster-soup is out of the question, with cod and oysters to follow. It must be brown. But if the Veal doesn't come from Brighton! Good G—! what a set of heathens these people are!'
POET. 'Eh? Oh, yes, brown, of course!'
FITZ. 'You haven't the slightest idea of the difficulties.'
POET. (mooning). 'She was dressed very becomingly in white Sauce.'

[1] Maurice Fitzgerald.
[2] Francatelli's book on Cookery.

Fitz. (taking it naturally). 'A la Bechamel. That 's what I 'm most anxious about. Do you think Ockendon understood my directions? The potatoes to be sliced about half an inch: sauce poured over: then fresh layer'—(becomes excited) 'if well done, I know nothing better in the world than Potatoes à la Bechamel!'

Poet. (writes). 'And you are all I care for in the world, dearest Rose! I care for nothing but you on earth!' (Answers a trebly repeated query) 'Oh, yes! I like Maintenon cutlets very much.'

Fitz. (rubbing his hands). 'I can trust to old Ockendon for them, thank Heaven!'

Poet. (getting awake). 'Your wife should be a good cook, Maurice?'

Fitz. 'Well, if she 's at all educated and civilized, she will be.'

Poet. 'I know a marriageable young lady who hates potatoes, doesn't understand a particle of the great science, and finishes her dinner in two minutes.'

Fitz. 'Lord help the man who marries her!'

Poet. 'I think he 'll be a lucky fellow.'

Fitz. 'No accounting for tastes!' (Pursues the theme.) 'The pheasant opposite you. I 'll take the plovers. Ockendon says the Jelly has set. Fancy your not knowing how much a gill is!—a gill and a half of Maraschino. I think the Jelly will be a success.'

Poet. 'Upon my honour, you look as radiant as if you had just touched off an ode!'

Fitz. 'We won't open the Champagne till the 2nd course.'

Poet. 'I stick to Claret.—What 's the matter?'

Fitz. (impatiently). 'I have asked you half a dozen times whether you think the Ratafias should garnish the Jelly!'

Poet. (indifferently). 'Just as you like.' (Writes) 'But a misfortune now befell our hero.'

Fitz. (with melancholy). 'I 've given up all hope of the plovers' eggs! Heigho!' (stretches himself in a chair in a state of absolute mental depression).

Poet, regarding him, takes out note-book: writes: 'Life is a thing of Circles, like Dante's Hell. In the narrowest of them Despair may be as abysmal, Hope as great as in the widest! The patriot who sees his country enslaved: the lover who wins a smile from his mistress one day, and hears the next that she has bestowed the like on another gentleman: these sorrow not, or joy not more violently than one who is deprived of plovers' eggs, expectant of them, or greets a triumphant dish of potatoes à la Béchamel!'

About the year 1858 Meredith first met Frederick Augustus Maxse (1833-1900). Captain Maxse, R.N., promoted Rear-Admiral in 1877, was the second son of James Maxse by his marriage with Lady Caroline Fitzhardinge, daughter of the fifth Earl of Berkeley. He acted as naval A.D.C. to Lord Raglan, and after the battle of the Alma displayed conspicuous gallantry in carrying despatches from the army to the fleet. Promoted Commander in 1855, he retired in 1867, and unsuccessfully contested Southampton in the Radical interest in the following year. During this election Meredith canvassed actively for him. He was also beaten in a subsequent contest for Middlesex in 1874. His Radical tendencies in those days were the dual outcome of his experiences of the inept unpreparedness of the Government for the war in the Crimea, and the sufferings which he saw and shared in that campaign. In later life he was a strong Unionist.

To Captain Maxse.

Copsham Cottage, Esher.

My dear Captain Maxse,—I have been struck down by illness, and did not receive your pamphlet till two

days back. I have been happy to do my best with regard to corrections.

I like the pamphlet. It goes with many of my views, and it is generous: a point on which I lay stress, for the popular principle is avowed selfishness and breeches pocket, or bare sentimentalism, in dealing with foreign relations.

I do not like the colloquial introduction. 'J. B.' and the 'West End' are in my opinion beneath the dignity of an earnest address to one's countrymen. I have taken the liberty (for which I beg your excuse) to strike out one or two sentences.

But, may I ask, are you not under some influence yonder? Are you not prompted by some peculiar feeling—a private friendship? The sound to me, throughout, is that of one whose heart was moved by personal esteem. I mention this, because I think it will be a general impression; and I know enough of the French to be aware that some of them rise high with you in intimacy.

Anyhow I think the pamphlet must fail; for what might have floated will sink it. It says true and pregnant things; but have you forgotten that when you are putting your countrymen and friend flagrantly in the wrong, they never can see it unless you consent to relieve their eyes with the shady doings of the opposite party.

You have not toned down your picture. You put us in the wrong entirely. Even I, who feel with you, entertained a constant protest as I read on.

I think you should have devoted a page or two to a consideration of the sentiments of the different classes of Frenchmen towards England and to an exposition of the French character. And it would have been as well to have made an attempt philosophically to account for these epidemics of animosity on both sides. I believe that on ours it springs solely from panic, and the revul-

sions of humiliation and shame attendant thereon. Where have the French more enthusiastic admirers of their valour? of their intellect? of their wit? I think our hands are given heartily across Channel till this cursed uneasiness about our 'homes' makes the Briton draw back and clench his honest fist.

Of the Emperor I strongly approve your bold speaking. He has done great work and shown great moderation towards us. The veil of the 'Panic' is between us and him; but even should he become our foe, the Italian campaign must be seen in its true features sooner or later. It is worthy an Epic. About Savoy our singing has been small, but the political principle involved in the appropriation of this province, and the danger to Switzerland, justify plain speaking.—Pardon me, I beg, and believe me, my dear Captain Maxse, yours very faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH

Verses given in MS. to Miss Janet Duff Gordon about the year 1859.

We sat beneath the humming pines:
We knew that we must part,
I might not even speak by signs
The motions of my heart:

And as I took your hand, and gazed
Subdued into your eyes,
I saw the arm of Fate upraised,
And still'd the inward cries;

I saw that this could never be
Which I had dared to pray:
And in the tear that fell from me,
There fell my life that day!

Verses given in MS. to Miss Janet Duff Gordon about the year 1859 *or* 1860.

The waves are pressing up with force,
Along the screaming shore ;
Like Phantom hosts of warrior horse,
They charge, beneath the roar.

And each darts out a foamy tongue
As prone he falls, and dies :
The dirge of many a soul is sung
Beneath yon stormy skies.

And may it be my dirge of dust,
If she who has my plight,
If she I love shall wreck my trust,
And wrap my soul in night.

In 1860 Miss Janet Duff Gordon became engaged to, and in December of the same year married, Henry James Ross, head of the firm of Briggs and Co., bankers, at Alexandria. Mr. Ross took part, with Layard, in the excavation of Nineveh. He also wrote a book, *Letters from the East,* 1837-1857.

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon.

COPSHAM, ESHER.

MY DEAR JANET,—Yesterday I went to Town, and of course forgot—not you—but your catalogue. I therefore called on Wyllis and What 's-his-name and asked the latest period of the packing. Thereupon a melancholy man conducted me to an enormous box. 'That 's choke full, sir, and we 've got 40 volumes more to stow in—somehow—*I* don't know how.' This was my time to tell him that you had bought half of Mudie's library, and expected that as well to be got into the said box.—Why,

wouldn't my Henry do it?—Yes, but, my dear Janet, Willis and What 's-his-name aren't in love with you, and they can't. Passion does not inspire them. As for your poet, he sinks to the lowest depths of prose, and suggests the necessity for a fresh box, a small one, in addition to the one of elephantine proportions and yet unequal stomach. You are to write to me, and say that you consent to this, and I will call on W. & W.—If this is clear, all right. But I feel utterly perplexed.

I have been, and am, knocked down again by the old illness. I hope it won't last, for it 's horridly dispiriting.

God bless you, my dear girl! If you don't make a good wife, I 've never read a page of woman. He 's a lucky fellow to get you, and the best thing he can do is to pray he may always know his luck. Watts & Coutts[1] passed like doleful spectres this afternoon, in the fog. The hunt is Queenless evermore!

Arthur 'hopes you 're quite well.' He can't think of anything more to say, and on my telling him I 've written so, he explodes with laughter.

Verses given in MS. to Miss Janet Duff Gordon.

LIED VON RASTRELLI

Deep, deep, under the sea,
Pearls throw their soft lights uselessly:
Hear the wave wander,
Hither and yonder:
Deep, deep, under the sea.

High, high, thro' the bright spheres,
Music there is no mortal hears:
(*or*, Harps of the Angels thrill heavenly ears):

[1] Coutts, huntsman of the Duc d'Aumale's harriers.

Love's divine chorus,
Passes dead o'er us:
High, high, thro' the bright spheres.

Dark, dark, here in my breast
Treasures and harpstrings idly rest:
All my life lingers
Dumb for thy fingers:
Dark, dark, here in my breast.

To F. Evans.[1]

COPSHAM COTTAGE, ESHER, *Jan.* 21, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for the £50 cheque on acct. I tried to call on you yesterday, when I was in Town, but had no time. Perhaps you may as well, since you kindly undertake the task, write to Messrs. Harper's agents, or send to them, and come to the best terms you can. The story[2] (as you may tell them) will suit Yankee sentiment and Yankee principles. Exalt me tolerably, and in fine, I shall be quite satisfied that you will arrange it as well as it can be done: but there should be no loss of time.

N.B.—Perhaps, should it be needful, you may say that we are going to be guilty of no impropriety in this tale, and will never again offend young maids.[3]

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon.

COPSHAM, ESHER, 1860.

MY DEAR ORANGE BLOSSOM,—I——[4] has been at me,

[1] Of Bradbury, Evans and Co., proprietors of *Once a Week* and *Punch*, now Bradbury, Agnew and Co. 'Dear old Pater' Evans, Meredith used to call him.

[2] *Evan Harrington.*

[3] *Richard Feverel* had been banned as 'immoral' and preached against from the pulpit—a fact which, in the 'sixties, did not stimulate the sale of fiction.

[4] The Esher doctor.

and with the best intentions in the world, no doubt, but on the Earth I lie, and imagination will picture the idea that I am going under it. Here is a cheerful theme to address to a sweet young bride! But if I am not better by Saturday I shall not witness the wreath on my Janet's head, nor see the fixing of the ring on her hand. . . .

I am distressed to hear such bad accounts of my dear Lady Gordon. Come I will, if I can, but I am horribly unwell. (There 's a rumour of the eldest C—— girl going to marry. . . .)—Your affectionate and faithful

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Janet Ross.

Esher.

My dear Janet,—A thousand thanks for the photo: it is a good and fitting present at this awful instant. It admirably represents the occasion. Looking on it, I see the corpse of the Maiden Janet. Just what she may henceforth give of herself, and no more. It isn't bad, it 's pleasant to have, but it 's Janet washed out and decorated with soot. Behind it lies her free youth. She looks darkly forward on the children of Egypt. It 's Janet half Copt already.

How do you feel? Do write down half a page of your sensations, and hand them to me, under seal, with directions that I may read them a year hence and compare with results. Not that you 're romantic, and I don't suppose you flutter vastly just when you 're caught, but still, dear Orange Blossom, you 're a bit of a bird, like the rest.

By the way, why am I to have the photo of Janet as wife, while Arthur takes the maiden?

Of course I 'll send out my books and my poems to my

best public. Unless I do them horridly, and I must soon get stronger, or I shall.

If I can come, as I trust to, I must return on Wednesday. I have all the writing on a paper now on my shoulders. Thursday is contribution day. I shall return and spend a week with your mother later, when she is alone, and may want me.

And now, my dear, my future Copt, and my good friend forever, as I hope, farewell, till we meet. I pray fervently you may be happy.

I think of leaving Copsham, to live in two small town rooms, that I may save for Arthur's education. The safest address to me from Egypt will be Chapman & Hall's, 193 Piccadilly.

To S. Lucas.[1]

ESHER.

MY DEAR LUCAS,—You sent proofs of the first story (The Highwayman), but, if I haven't returned them, I have mislaid them. Send proofs of the second story at once, as I have now time to finish it. By the way, I don't think your common pay should extend to me, and you are bound to heighten the scale. If you do, I will give you some very good stories, but I must have money. Evans, I am sure, will do this, upon your reputation.

As to those that I wrote for the occasion, they have not my stamp upon them, and I would prefer not to append my name. In the matter of verse, also, I shall rarely be able to give my time for the money I get for it. You have the option of rejecting. Consider whether you should not offer fitting inducements to contribute one's best?

[1] Editor of *Once a Week*. Of the 'Highwayman' and 'Paul Bentley' here referred to, no trace can be found.

I think you might at once put the 1st portion of 'Paul Bentley' into the artist's hands.

I wish you a sound digestion to your Christmas, and am, my dear Lucas, your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Janet Ross.

COPSHAM, ESHER, *May* 17, 1861.

MY DEAR JANET,—The little man has been in great glee to answer you. He had paper and everything ready to do so a week before your letter came, and his reply is all his own, and from his heart. He must love you. Who could fail to love one so staunch and tender to him? Here have I waited silently, thinking much of you, and incurring I knew not what condemnation. I have not thought of you less because I withheld my pen. The truth is, my experiences are all mental—I see nothing of the world, and what I have to say goes into books. However, I am now compelled by my state of health to give it up for a time. Your poet—dare I call myself that, after hearing the rhapsodic eulogies of old Alder?[1] I assure you, my dear, I cannot equal him. I might put him into rhythm, but that would spoil his hearty idiom. I feel quite a friendliness for old Alder after hearing him speak of you.—'I never saw a young lady like her, and never shall again. She's a loss to Esher and to England!' etc. You are compared with Miss Gilbert and Miss Reynolds; and men are dared to say that either fair equestrian surpassed you on horseback. Apropos of the former lady, Landseer has a picture of her in the Academy, leaning exhausted against the flanks of a mare couchant. 'Taming of the Shrew' the picture is named, and it is sufficiently bad.

[1] A butcher of Esher, and a regular follower of the Duc d'Aumale's hounds.

Millais has nothing. Hunt a 'Street Wooing in Cairo,' of which you could judge better than I. Leighton has a 'Paolo and Francesca'; painted just as the book has dropped and they are in no state to read more. You would scorn it; but our friendship never rested on common sentiments in art. I greatly admire it. I think it the sole English picture exhibiting passion that I have seen. I have the delight to stand alone in my judgment of this, as of most things, and I shall see the world coming round to my opinion, and thinking it its own. Does that smack of the original George M.?—Never mind. Well: there is a beautiful portrait of Alice P——. Idealised of course—showing more in her than she possesses; but my friend Maxse—one who is strong on points of feminine beauty (a naval man loose upon society)—thinks her superior to the picture in physique. He meets her out. He said to me, the first time: 'I think she thought me slow':—the second: 'Is she stupid?' His conclusive judgment pronounces her an exquisitely plumed little pol parrot. She is being admired: people think she should wear more clothing. The effect is said to be that of a damsel such as you see at the booth of a country fair.—Maxse is a very nice fellow with strong literary tastes. He was Naval Aide-de-Camp to Lord Lyons in the Crimea. I dare say you have heard of him. You would like him. He is very anxious to be introduced some day to Rose Jocelyn. I tell him that Janet ROSS is a finer creature. If Rose satisfies him, how will not Janet! He has taken a cottage at Molesey, and we make expeditions together on foot. Talking of Rose, did you see the Saturday? It says you are a heroine who deserve to be a heroine. And yet I think I missed you. Your Mother tells me that Mrs. Austin speaks in very handsome terms of the performance generally, and of the

portrait in particular.—I have not seen your mother for some days. She has had another attack, a very severe one. It wears my heart to think of her. And yet her constitution rallies from time to time, and I have still strong hopes of her ultimate recovery. She must not spend another winter in England. The baby is quite charming. Like you, but rosier, and with a tendency to be just as positive. She articulates admirably, and shows qualities equal to the physiological promise I have noted from the first. How I should wish Arthur to conquer a fair position in the world, and lead her away as a certain Janet was led! At present he is not brilliant but he is decidedly hopeful. I don't want to force him yet. I wish to keep him sound, and to instil good healthy habits of mind and body. In writing, spelling, and reading; in memory for what he acquires, few children surpass him. And he really thinks without being at all instigated to think. I remained at Copsham for his sake, and perhaps shall not quit it for some time to come. He will not go to a regular school till next year. I don't like the thought of his going; but it must be, and so I submit.

I have three works in hand. The most advanced is 'Emilia Belloni,' of which I have read some chapters to your mother, and gained her strong approval. Emilia is a feminine musical genius. I gave you once, sitting on the mound over Copsham, an outline of the real story it is taken from. Of course one does not follow out real stories; and this has simply suggested Emilia to me.—Then, my next novel is called 'A Woman's Battle.' Qy.—good title? I think it will be my best book as yet. The third is weaker in breadth of design. It is called 'Van Diemen Smith'—is interesting as a story. Nous verrons:—Last night I went with Maxse to the House of Commons to hear the Debate on the Constitution.

I saw your friend Layard, but did not hear him. Eothen [1] was absent. Gladstone swallowed the whole Conservative body with his prodigious yawn and eloquence alternately. I never saw a man yawn so naïvely and excusably. The truth is that there is some honesty but small stock of brains on the Conservative side. I could not wait for Bright. I heard Horsman, who is good enough, and seems bidding for the Conservative leadership. He will perhaps get it; but he is not the man to prop a sinking cause. It is clear that we in England are going down to a lower circle. Natural development, no doubt.

I have made friends with a nice fellow lately: a son of the Ambassador at Athens, Sir T. W—— whom your mother knew. He married a Bonaparte—a daughter of Lucien—who is what all the Bonaparte women are. Two boys, N—— W—— and B—— W——. The latter I know. He has nice tastes, and is an odd mixture of Irishman and Corsican. He wanted me to go to Athens with him. I may meet him returning and come home through Provence. He is intimate with the members of the new School of Provençal poets there, and wishes me to know them. Mistral I have read. He is really a fine poet. If I go I shall have something to write to you about.

The dear good Bart. looks melancholy riding alone. It 's rather sad seeing him out. Otherwise he is as cheerful and of the same port as of yore.

My dear, I have been thinking many a month of a Wedding present for you. I don't like jewels, and books you have enough of. It struck me that a magnificent photograph of your father and mother, Mossy and Rainy, would please you best. Your mother will sit when she is well enough. What say you?

[1] Kinglake.

In conclusion, let me beg you to send to me and tell me anything that you want that I may have the pleasure to get it for you. I rejoice with all my soul that you are so happy. By the way, Maxse introduced me to the Comte de Paris the other day: who said of your husband: 'Mr. Ross is a very clever man,' in a tone of conviction and esteem. Of you he spoke as it pleased me to hear. The Orleanists seem looking up, owing to the Aumale pamphlet. The Duke was chairman of the Literary Fund Dinner last night, and spoke capitally.

Remember me to your husband very kindly. And please write soon and cordially forgive me. My heart is very much with you, and I am always at my Janet's service.

To F. M. Evans.

[Zürich], *July* 9, 1861.

My dear Evans,—Be so good as to send me £30, through your banker, to Innsbrück. Address Poste Restante; and please don't fail to do this within a couple of days after receipt of this letter, as your servant will require it.

Arthur is quite well, and bore his travelling like a man. He met with perfect kindness from everybody, and remarks that 'these Germans are nice people.' He has it on his mind that he did not go to say good-bye to Mrs. Orridge. Let her know his compunctious visitings.

Write a word of avis that your banker has done the good deed; and also, if Lucas has not written, say whether he wants the continuation and conclusion of the 'Dyke Farm.'[1]

Zürich is a charming place, with a clear lake, fine hills,

[1] There is no trace of this story—probably an early title for *Rhoda Fleming*.

and Alps in the distance. The Swiss fleece you with admirable gravity. The great 'shots' of Stanz parade the town with their prizes in their hats. . . . I shall send you something shortly. I am better already. I shall soon be eager for work.

To F. M. Evans.

MERAN, SOUTH TYROL, AUSTRIA, 1861.

MY DEAR EVANS,—I wrote to you from Zürich, asking for £30 to be sent on immediately to Innsbrück. It has not come. I have calculated on it, and am therefore quite upset by the contretemps. I have an idea that the letter cannot have reached you, or something is wrong. I wrote to Chapman from Laudek, but am losing faith in letters. So, to make sure, I write to you again. Please send, on the day you get this, £20 to the Poste Restante, Meran, Süd Tyrol, Austria. I am almost inclined to ask you to telegraph to a banker here to hand the money to me at the hotel, Graf v. Meran. The truth is I have made a mess of my money arrangements and am here without any, dependent on a civil landlord for wherewithal to make merry abroad. Don't fail to do something. I wish Frederick would see Fred Chapman and hear what he has done. If he has sent the money in time for it to reach me here on Monday, then please send £10 to Milan, Lombardy, Italy, Poste Restante—in a registered letter, or credit on a banker. If he has delayed, or has not received my letter, then I don't object to the expense of a telegraph to a banker here, telling him to hand me the money at my hotel.

In my letter from Zürich I wished you to tell me whether Lucas wanted the conclusion of the 'Dyke Farm.' I left word for him to speak to that effect, in Bouverie St. What the deuce has come to you all?

The moment I leave England all 's dead silent to rearward. I 'm not of much importance, but still I expect my country to make a little sign. I suppose, from Lucas's silence, he does not want the work in question. But why doesn't he say so? Contributors used in this fashion, fall to the ground. Pray, write and tell me some news. Is it true that 'Once a Week' is dead? Is the 'Times' defunct? Send to Milan a paper or two of any kind, with the latest news. I shall see you, I hope, in the latter end of August. The country about Meran is a great garden open to the South. Arthur rests in one of the valleys more north, and is making a collection of butterflies and beetles. He is quite well, and very much astonished at the smiles he meets in the houses. His more poetical impressions he keeps to himself.

To F. M. Evans.

MERAN, *July* 1861.

MY DEAR EVANS (FATHER AND SON!), I have received the £20 forwarded here, and right thankfully. Your letter to Innsbrück has not reached me; nor have I heard from Lucas.

I shall see whether the long-named banker at Innsbrück won't forward the money here, otherwise I shall be put out of my route altogether.

My walks of about 30 miles a day under a fiery sun have improved me, and I think I can go to work now for another nine months. Have you any idea of what Lucas's intentions were concerning the 'Dyke Farm'?

I have an autobiographical story in view for O.a.W. when Chapman's 3 vols. are out of hand.

That is, if O.a.W. survives. For I know nothing and hear nothing. Nobody sends me a 'Times' or a 'Punch'! I am forgotten if I don't set to work all the

agencies of science. You write me contemptuously short business paragraphs. It 's clear to me that travelling is for great men alone. They have their country's eyes on them!

The bother is that if I only knew where Lucas is going to, I might come across him, and put something stronger than a pen to his breast to make him out with what he means.

Arthur is quite well. He is here, and a mighty traveller as you may suppose. He says he is happy, and is catching butterflies.

To Captain Maxse.

MERAN, SOUTH TYROL, *July* 26, 1861.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—Is it you who send the poem 'Tannhäuser'[1] to me here? And why? Do you think it very good?—O my dear fellow! I 'll talk about that presently, but I wish you were with me or I with you: for my companion 's a dear old boy, but we don't get on quite as travellers. And not only for that reason, but for many reasons, I want to see you, and shake your hand, and hear about your bubbles, and the life you go through. In fact, I begin to feel that I must see you and have a very strong affection for you, if you don't mind hearing that much, O my shame-faced Briton! Well, I fear I shall not meet you at Baden Baden, even if you go there. I have been thrown out by money-arrangements failing, letters missing, etc. I return by Botzen to Verona; thence to Milan, Turin, Dijon, Paris. The dear little man is quite well, making a collection of Tyrolese butterflies and beetles. He is at Laudek, about 80 miles in the rear of us; at the junction of the Inn and

[1] 'Tannhäuser, or the Battle of the Bards,' by Neville Temple (Julian Henry Charles Fane) and Edward Trevor (Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, Earl of Lytton).

the Rosanna. The Rosanna, by the way, put me in mind of you—nay, sang of you with a mountain voice, somehow, I don't know how. Perhaps because it is both hearty and gallant, subtle, and sea-green. You never saw so lovely a brawling torrent. Clear, ice-cold, foaming. You shall have the verses it inspired. Tell me: Would you like the dedication of my volume of Poems, when it 's ready? Say, no, if you feel no. For my part I feel the honour will be mine.

We walked from Innsbrück to Laudek in three days. W—— does not walk in rain, or when it 's to be apprehended; nor when there 's a chance of nightfall; nor does he like it in the heat; and he 's not the best hand in the world at getting up in the morning, and he 's rather excitable. But still thoroughly kind and good. So we did not come at a great rate. From Laudek we took three days and a quarter to Meran, whence I write to you. The country is wonderful. Mountains holding up cups of snow to the fiery sun, who glares on them in vain. The peasantry are a noble race: pious, and with a strong smell. Priests abound and soap flies before them. I sigh, like Tannhäuser, for the Venusberg. Now, don't you think the writers of 'Tannhäuser,' clever as they are and of marked poetic power, should have waited till they wore off Tennyson somewhat? Such is my opinion. There was to be a review in the 'Times.' Has it appeared?

Meran is southern in heat and luxury of growth of all kinds of fruits. The cicada goes all day like a factory wheel—poetic simile! The flies sting, and the sun is relentless. I begin to understand why Daphne fled into a laurel from the fiery fellow. Still I like sun, as you do. Anything 's better than the meagre days we got last year. This land abounds in falling waters, brooks, torrents, all ice cold. We drank at the wells every ten

minutes, sat over the brooks naked legged, dipped our heads desperately. Here are crucifixes at every fifty yards. You go to a well and the pipe through which the water flows is through the body of a Christ. Hear you a droning noise on the wind, it issues from a body of peasants mumbling their rosaries as they march to work. They are invariably courteous. W—— says, they remind him more of the Spaniards than do any other people, but they have not the same prolonged gravity of deportment. Nothing can be grander than the colossal mountains of porphyry and dolomite shining purple and rosy, snow-capped here and there, with some tumultuous river noising below, and that eternal stillness overhead, save when some great peak gathers the thunders and bellows for a time. Then to see the white sulphurous masks curl and cover round it, and drip moisture on the hanging meadows, would task your powers of description. O my friend!

Do our loves prosper?

'Life is real—life is earnest!
Tiddle lol de lol de lol.'

But I wish you would fix soon; for as I told you, and as you feel, time goes, and the wheel is pleasant, but if you keep on the wheel you are grey before you know, and then the past looks horridly empty. Heigho! I have Art to solace me. If I saw you stick to that I would not preach. My health is better. I can do 30 miles per diem under this sun, without knocking up. Nevertheless the nerves are not yet right. One good sign is that I am very anxious to finish my 'Emilia'; and have gentle prickings about other matters in my mind.

Meran is a glorious place. We look towards Italy. The country is like a garden. The Adige flows on one

hand, the Passeyr on the other. We have a Schwimmbad here. The water is too cold for swimming. It stings. W—— goes to it in the morning and remains naked somewhere in the neighbourhood all day. Adventures we have had none. The old boy is very desponding about his circumstances, and he won't buckle up to brave them. I suppose he knows best, so I say nothing.

My first sight of the Alps has raised odd feelings. Here at last seems something more than earth, and visible, if not tangible. They have the whiteness, the silence, the beauty and mystery of thoughts seldom unveiled within us, but which conquer Earth when once they are. In fact they have made my creed tremble.—Only for a time. They have merely dazzled me with a group of symbols. Our great error has been (the error of all religion, as I fancy) to raise a spiritual system in antagonism to Nature. What though yonder Alp does touch the Heavens? Is it a rebuke to us below? In you and in me there may be lofty virgin points, pure from what we call fleshliness. And so forth.—W—— is lost in astonishment at me because I don't look out for a 'woman.' 'You 're a pote, and I can't think how a pote can get on without one. I 'd go mad.'—Mrs. W. is very kind to Arthur, and really in love with the Irish-Corsican. They spoon terribly. Perhaps I am getting old, for I don't envy them, though I feel a kind of emptiness—an uncared-for feeling. A good friendship would satisfy me.—You made an impression on Lady Duff. She likes you and takes to you altogether.—How is it the Austrians get beaten by the French? A finer set of men than the Austrian soldiers you can't see anywhere. Their drill seems good. They don't expect war for some months. I hear Benedek has left Verona for Carlsbad.

Write to me, Poste Restante, Milan, Lombardy, Italy, and don't fast, there's a dear fellow.—Your faithful,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

MILAN, *August* 16, 1861.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—Behold a pretty picture, which is to tell you I have been in Venice, which you know so well, which is a dream and a seduction to the soul of me. I wish you had been there with me.—Now, mark the Campanile above, for you are to have it reproduced one day in illustrious verse. There did I conceive an Ode.—I have followed Byron's and Shelley's footsteps there (in Venice) on the Lido. Do you remember in 'Julian and Maddalo,' where the two, looking towards the Euganean hills, see the great bell of the Insane Asylum swing in the sunset? I found the exact spot. I have seldom felt melancholy so strongly as when standing there. You know I despise melancholy, but the feeling came. I love both those poets; and with my heart given to them I felt as if I stood in a dead and useless time. So are we played with sometimes! At that hour your heart was bursting with a new passion, and the past was as smoke flitting away from a fired-off old contemptible gun. Well, I walked the Lido every day, and bathed with my little man in the tepid Adriatic, and floated through the streets in my gondola, and received charming salutes from barred windows: from one notably where a very pretty damsel, lost in languor, hung with her loose-robed bosom against the iron, and pressed amorously to see me pass, till she could no further: I meantime issued order to Lorenzo, my gondolier, to return, and lo, as I came slowly into view she as slowly arranged her sweet shape to be seen decently, and so stood, but half a pace in the recess, with one dear hand

on one shoulder, her head slightly lying on her neck, her drooped eyelids mournfully seeming to say: 'No, no; never! tho' I am dying to be wedded to that wish of yours and would stake my soul I have divined it!'—wasn't it charming? This too, so intensely human from a figure vaporous, but half discernible!

I have been alone with Arthur in Venice, which was a blessing, for somehow or other dear old W—— isn't at all the right sort of companion. He says he thinks it 's his stomach. I tell him that it is not fair for a man to throw his stomach in one's face. The fact is the dear old boy (meaning excellently) is irritable exceedingly: tiffs twenty times a day, and now and then a sulk. Then ensues reconciliation: 'Mardith! I don't mind saying I 'm sorry! and ye can judge of me 'ffection for ye when ye see I don't hes'tate to sacrifice me praide, etc.' He owns still he thinks me in the wrong, when the next occasion recurs. You may imagine this sort of schoolboy business is not to my taste. When one does meet a woman, it 's better to have her in petticoats.—Here (in Milan) I met him again. He went last night to see his mother on Lake Como, at the Villa d'Este. I go to him to-morrow. Next day, I trust, homeward by way of the Mont Cenis, to Paris. I shall rest in Paris a day or two, according to the state of my funds. Will you write to me there, Poste Restante. I want to know where I can see you in London, for I have an immense longing to wring your hand. I will accept a dinner. That is to say, a dish of fish, an English steak, and no wine. I am much better in health; but, you see, I have been somewhat disappointed about the management of Arthur. I have been able to get only one week's walk, and the rest of the time the little fellow has been on my hands. But what a jolly boy and capital companion he is! Full of fun and observation, good temper and

endurance. The tour has sown much fine stuff in him, but I am anxious at last to have him home. As for me, I believe I shall now be in condition for labour of the remunerative kind. The novelty has been worth the money in all ways. Could I but afford to rest and look on man for one year! Non è possibile.—You must see Arthur's Diary. He is at it now, at my elbow.

Yes! those bleeding, tortured images by the wayside were painful and became exasperating almost as much so as the sight of the crowds of white coats through the whole of the Venetian territory. In Verona they have a garrison of 45,000 men. The population numbers 60,000. The soldiers have to keep to themselves, the officers are cut, and nothing so miserable and menacing can be fancied. Even the girls won't be spoken to. I saw an amusing scene of a couple of officers after two, who led them a terrible round and finally drew up at a melon-seller's. There they began chattering, wouldn't let Mr. Ober-lieutenant get in a word; suddenly they turned round, fired a volley of contempt and virtuous indignation and retired into the applauding crowd. When Venus turns against Mars what shall the poor devil do? Better doff his casque.—Now about 'Tannhäuser.' I think the review in the 'Times' stupid. It 's just a blow of the trumpet. The poem is a failure, and the young men ought to have been told so. It fails, because the central point (in action), the 'Battle,' is absurdly weak, even to silliness: because the theme, which is so glorious, is spoilt, in order to cry up and preach a sort of cherubim chastity popular just now, and which is not the real thing: because it has no character, even done in outline. It contains, I think, no image, or scene, that the mind clings to. I don't care much for the passages you point out—'a drooping harebell' is in the 'Princess.' The revelation of Venus is

poor, matched with the subject. To my mind the best parts are the departure of the pilgrims, and the return, especially that of the one being questioned. The filing by of the procession reminds me of the main point in V. Hugo's ballad 'Les Cymbaliers du Roi.' On re-reading the poem I am confirmed in a cloyed sensation I first experienced. The alliteration is really so persistent that the ears feel as if they had been horribly drummed on. Power of narrative, I see. Mimetic power of a wonderful kind, and flow of verse, also extraordinary. I am not touched by any new music in it. I do not find any comprehension of human nature, or observation, or sympathy with it. I perceive none of the subtleties, deep but unobtrusive, that show that a mind has travelled. Great windy phrases, and what I must term (for so they hit my sense) encaustic imageries do not satisfy me any longer, though I remember a period when they did. The passage

'Or shall I call you men or beasts,'

praised by the 'Times,' shows the Muse puff-cheeked, and Elizabeth ridiculous. The scene was managed in order to bring her out. It does so with a vengeance. Don't you see how ill in accordance with the little bit of idea one gets of Elizabeth this is? She may be vehement without acting the virago. Such a creature would not have commenced with invective: she might have heated herself up to it: entreaty, self-abandonment, unconscious declarations of her love for the object of their wrath in unmeasured praise of him, excuse of him, etc.; then, when her words seem not to be producing their effect, then a fiery line, if you like. But how stagey is the 'Or shall I call you, etc.!' And this is the thing that attracts you?

Something better has done that. Well, I will tell you

what I think. You know I wish very earnestly to see you, a man made to understand and make happy any pure, good woman, married to one. I don't think any son owes his parents more than the conscientious assurance that he has clearly thought over what he is about to do (in such a matter); seeing that men are the only possible judges in the case; and that the stake is all their own. To have found a suitable person, and to give her up for anything on earth is like seeing a jewel on the shore and rejecting it on account of the trouble of conveying it home. But do you strongly recognise the jewel? Have you found her? A boy can't, but a man must reason, in these cases. You may know your love from its power of persisting and bearing delay. Passion has not these powers. If your love of this person is true and not one of your fancies, it will soon light you clear enough. . . . And don't be hasty and think you are trusting your instinct by grasping suddenly at the golden apple. Can you bear poverty for her? Will she for you? Can she, even if she would? Think whether you are risking it, and remember that very few women bear it and retain their delicacy and charm. Some do. Can you think her one of the chosen? The great difficulty is to be honest with ourselves. If there comes a doubt, the wave of passion overwhelms it. Try and listen to your doubt. See whether you feel, not what we call love, but tenderness for her. Satisfy yourself on this point. And then determine to wait. You can, if your heart has conceived real tenderness. If not, should you marry her? You speak of securing her. You may secure her person, but how can you be yet sure of more? If continually you find her worthier, fix your mind to win her by the force of your love. Then should you have that divine delight, I ask you whether you can see any earthly obstacle in your way? You

are on the highest pinnacles and may remain untouched, whatever is said or done. You will have pains and aches —agonies to go through. They serve to strengthen you.—God bless you, my dear Maxse! Believe me your faithful and affectionate GEORGE MEREDITH.

I shall be in Paris about the 21st or 22nd, or 23rd. Please write when you get this.

Did you get the Pome I sent?

To Mrs. Janet Ross (from Arthur G. Meredith).

COPSHAM COTTAGE, *Sept.* 25, 1861.

MY DEAR JANET,—I was very much pleased to receive your letter but I am very sorry you are not well. Zillah goes to school with me and I like it very much. Pat a little while ago went into the water to fetch sticks, but Jessy spoilt him by catching hold of his ear and tried to make him dive. Jessy is a much better dog than Pat. Our gardens are getting on very well I have got a lot of peas for seed and some beetroot almost ready to dig up. About three months ago I went on the continent with my papa. I started from Dover to Ostend and going in the harbour I saw some Belgian peasants picking perywinkles; they laughed at us and had such rosy cheeks and I thought them very funny. Then I had a long day in the train from Ostend to Coblentz. In the morning I saw a steamer going to Mainz and so we dressed and got in it. On each side of the Rhine there are mountains that have old castles on them where robber knights used to live, and there was the Lurli rock, they fired a gun and there were three echoes. In the morning the waiter at Mentz took me upstairs to a high place and showed me a stork's nest built in a chimney. I went from Mentz to Zurich, where

the lake of Zurich was so clear that you could see to the bottom of it. The next day I went up part of a mountain and dined, and I saw the Alps at a distance; there was a crow which came hopping along and was quite tame, but another boy teased it, and so it flew away.

From Zurich I went to Munich and I crossed lake Constance. Coming in the harbour I saw a statue of a lion in the water. I stopped at Munich a day and at twelve o'clock I heard a nice band. The Bavarian soldiers dress is blue which looks very pretty. There is a beautiful palace at Munich. I went into a beautiful garden called the English garden were I saw some fire flies which show a green light. From Munich I went to Innsbruck were there was a church with bronze kings and queens surrounding the Emperor Maximilian and I saw the tomb of Andreas Hofer. I went up to some high gardens and had a view of Innsbruck. From Innsbruck I went to Laudeck were I caught some very pretty butterflys from Laudeck I went to Meran were there are castles. I went to schloss Labenberg and Schloss Guin were there was a nice man and I bathed in the Passier. From Meran I went to Verona and I went to Venice were I was very happy. I went about in gondolas in the canals and bathed at the Liedo the water is so hot that you can stopp in a long while. I dine at tables d'hote and had my own bottle of wine, lots of grapes; and lemonade on the place St. Mark. I went in the place of St. Mark were there were some pictures I went from Venice to Milan and went into the great cathedral from Milan I went to Paris, over the Mount Cenis, I liked going over. At Paris I had breakfast at cafés I went to the Champs Elysees I saw the monument of Napoleon on which were the battles he fought. I went in the Louve palace were there were some beautiful

Italian pictures. Then I went home. I remain my dear Janet your affectionate friend, ARTHUR G. MEREDITH.

Note in George Meredith's writing :—

This is entirely as you would wish it to be—the small man's own, I bearing the stamp thereof. He will have a lot more of it to tell you when he has you by the ear.

Written on the back of the foregoing letter :—

MY DEAR GOOD JANET. Forgive me. I have been going to write you an account of the Travels of self and son; but I am now so torn to pieces and hard at work that I can't sit down to anything. Your letter was based on false intelligence, my dear. It was perfectly right of you to take up the case as you did. I am glad you like me well enough to do so. Be sure I would not miss your friendship for much; and would stoop my pride for it, even if that stood in the way. As it is there is no feeling of the sort. God bless you. I will write fully in a few days.—I saw your father two or three days back. He is looking as ever. In health I also am better. Arthur is now at Weybridge seeing his mother daily.—Your ever faithful and affectionate GEORGE M.

To a Friend.

ESHER.

. . . As to the temptation, it was Eve's own doing, born of champagne and the promptings of her blood. . . . She is a well meaning girl. Be kind to her. Do not grow ironical. Forbear from satire at tender intervals. Make her believe (she will so readily!) that she is never ridiculous, or that you never see it, which is a subtler flattery; for woman is cute, and would rather that you should have the bandage on your eyes than that she should.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *Oct.* 19, 1861.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—How can I thank you for the trouble you take! Your friend Holroyd's opinion is worth having and will be serviceable. I received the Cartes-de-visite on the day I was quitting Copsham for Suffolk, the 'Giles' of Counties I always think, where I lived in a dumpling state for a week. When I entered the world again I found that one had quitted it who bore my name: and this filled my mind with melancholy recollections which I rarely give way to. My dear boy, fortunately, will not feel the blow, as he might have under different circumstances. I tell you this to excuse myself for my silence. I will come to-morrow, if you please. I have an engagement in town to-night, which necessitates a tail coat, so do not be frightened when you see me, nor stand in awe, nor strive to emulate. I hope for music for which I have a great longing.

I am engaged getting ready a volume of poems. If I had a piano, and my rooms here were only a little bigger than yourself and Mrs. Hardman, I would have the audacity to ask you to come. The dread of my soul is the evening! How shall a poor guest be amused here? Yet is November fine: a great observer, old, shrewd, unerring, said to me once—'I always take my holidays in November, being sure of a greater number of clear, fine days than in any other month.' I corroborate. Think over this and communicate with me. To Mrs. Hardman I could say that in November, she being well wrapped up, might even enjoy the late autumn sunshine.

William Hardman, a barrister, subsequently chairman of Surrey quarter-sessions, and later editor of the *Morning Post*, had lately taken for one summer a country cottage near Esher. Widely read, with a large circle of friends, a

cheerful outlook upon the world, and a keen sense of humour, mated, moreover, with a lady in whom personal beauty was combined with musical tastes and rare personal charm, his hospitality was a welcome social tonic, and close lifelong friendship resulted.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, ESHER, 1861.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Most certainly I will come with very great pleasure; bringing my bag to show that I am in earnest about a bed. By the way, do you know, it is dangerous to ask poets to sleep at a house? You ask them to dine, never to sleep, for if you do so it means they are only to be got rid of by a ruse. Numerous cases might be cited. How, if I tax your ingenuity?

I see 'The Silver Cord'[1] reviewed in the 'Saturday' and, as I think, fairly. But it is a question whether Brooks is still young enough to feel that. Please do not spare him yourself, but put him on his mettle, and his next work will be capital.

I am exceedingly sorry to lose you both. I can only hope that you will, whenever you think proper, come to this humble place as frankly as I accept the opening to your

HOSPITABLE TOWN MANSION!

6 o'clock is an excellent hour, and I have just enough faith in my appetite and honour to say that I will be punctual.

My little man says he hopes he shall see you and Mrs. Hardman here soon. He also mutters something about 'Pantomime' which I cannot comprehend. We both send greetings to Mrs. Hardman, whose behaviour in the boat, let me add, has proved her to be a companion of men.

[1] *The Silver Chord*, by C. W. Shirley Brooks (London, Bradbury and Evans, 1861).

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.[1]

COPSHAM COTTAGE, ESHER,
SURREY, *Nov.* 13, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter. Let me tell you at once that I feel it to be most generous, and I should be glad to think I deserved such hearty praise as fully as I do the censure. But on that point, I must be allowed to give you two or three words of explanation. Apropos of the 'Rosanna,' it was written from the Tyrol, to a friend, and was simply a piece of friendly play. Which should not have been published, you add? Perhaps not, but it pleased my friend, and the short passage of description was a literal transcript of the scene. Moreover, though the style is open to blame, there is an idea running through the verses, which, while I was rallying my friend, I conceived to have some point for a larger audience.

It is true that I have fallen from what I once hoped to do. The fault is hardly mine. Do you know Vexation, the slayer? There is very little poetry to be done when one is severely and incessantly harassed. My nerves have given way under it, and it is only by great care and attention to the directions of my doctor, that I can work at all.—I have now more leisure and somewhat better health, and the result is, that I have gone back partially to my old mistress.

As to my love for the Muse, I really think that is earnest enough. I have all my life done battle in her behalf, and should, at one time, have felt no blessing to be equal to the liberty to serve her. Praise sings strangely in my ears. I have been virtually propelled into a practical turn, by the lack of encouragement for any

[1] Headmaster of King Edward VI. Grammar School, Norwich; later, Canon of Norwich. Author of *One Generation of a Norfolk House*, *Trials of a Country Parson*, etc.

other save practical work. I have no doubt that it has done me good, though the pleasure your letter gives me, and let me say also the impetus, is a proof that I should have flourished better under a less rigorous system.

If you do me the favour to look at 'Once a Week' during the next two months, you will see some poems of mine that are of another cast. The 'Cassandra,' you will see, is as severe in rhythm as you could wish. But one result of my hard education since the publication of my boy's book in '51 (those poems were written before I was twenty) has been that I rarely write save from the suggestion of something actually observed. I mean, that I rarely write verse. Thus my Jugglers, Beggars, etc., I have met on the road, and have idealized but slightly. I desire to strike the poetic spark out of absolute human clay. And in doing so I have the fancy that I do solid work—better than a carol in mid air. Note the 'Old Chartist,' and the 'Patriot Engineer,' that will also appear in 'Once a Week.' They may not please you, but I think you will admit that they have a truth condensed in them. They are flints perhaps, and not flowers. Well, I think of publishing a volume of Poems in the beginning of '62, and I will bring as many flowers to it as I can. It may be, that in a year or two I shall find time for a full sustained Song. Of course I do not think of binding down the Muse to the study of facts. That is but a part of her work. The worst is, that, having taken to prose delineations of character and life, one's affections are divided. I have now a prose damsel crying out to me to have her history completed; and the creatures of a novel are bubbling up; and in truth, being a servant of the public, I must wait till my master commands before I take seriously to singing.

This is a long letter for a man to write about himself; and it is the first time I have been guilty of such a thing.

It has not been possible for me to reply to you in any other way.

I will conclude by saying that, whenever you are in London, if you are to visit me, it will give me great pleasure to welcome you. I must warn you that my cottage has very much the appearance of a natural product of the common on which it stands, 'far from resort of men.' But I can give you a bed and good cookery, of its kind. In the winter it will be difficult to tempt friends to meet you. In the summer they find the place pleasant, and believe me, I shall hold it an honour if you will take rank among them.

To Mrs. Janet Ross.

COPSHAM, ESHER, *Nov.* 19, 1861.

MY VERY DEAR JANET,—I plead ill health: I plead vexation, occupation, general insufficiency: I plead absence from home, absence from my proper mind, and a multitude of things: and now I am going to pay my debts. But are not my letters really three single gentlemen rolled into one? This shall count for ten. Now the truth is that my Janet is, by her poet at least, much more thought of when he doesn't write to her than when he does. Vulgar comparisons being always the most pungent, I will say, Lo, the Epicurean to whom his feast is still in prospect: he dreams of it: it rises before him in a thousand hues and salutes his nostril with scents heavenly. He dines. 'Tis gone. 'Tis in the past and with it go his rosy visions.—Your P. G., to wit H——, I saw him the other day, and shall probably dine with him on Thursday—Quoth I, at a period of our interview—Have you, O H—— replied duly to the fair Alexandrienne? Then went he through much pantomime, during my just reproaches, and took your address—which may be an

excellent P. G. performance, and no more. You will see. He is in new chambers full of pictures, Old Masters, we hear. For a fine putative Leonardo he disbursed recently £400. And Sir Charles Eastlake said—never mind what. Then, too, a Masaccio for which he gave £19. 7s. 6¾d., was Exhibited at the British Institution and the papers took note of nothing else. And Sir Charles Eastlake said —as before.

H—— is a good old boy. He has a pleasant way of being inquisitive and has already informed me, quite agreeably, that I am a gentleman, though I may not have been born one. Some men are always shooting about you like May flies in little quick darts, to see how near you they may come. The best thing is to smile and enjoy the fun of it. I confess a private preference for friends who are not thus afflicted, and get the secret by instinct. As my Janet does, for instance.—The dear indifferent Bart. I meet occasionally; in the train, or on lonely Celia; looking as if he bore with life, but had not the exact reason for his philosophy handy. He speaks out like a man concerning your husband, and I should wish every husband to have a father-in-law who appreciates him as heartily. Your Mother's Diary will not, I suppose, reach you before this letter. On the whole it is very hopeful. Secondly, it is immensely amusing, and shows her fine manly nature admirably. O what a gallant soul she is! and how very much I love her! I had only time during the passage of the train to read it, and couldn't get to the end. As yet the voyage has wrought no cure: but the change and the sea-breeze and shaking have done good and produced favourable excitement. I have new friends whom I like, and don't object to call by name. A Mr. and Mrs. Hardman I met in Esher this autumn. She is very pleasant, and is one of the rare women who don't find it necessary to fluster

their sex under your nose eternally, in order to make you like them. I gave her private's rank in Janet's Amazonian regiment, with chances of promotion. Also he is a nice fellow: a barrister who does photographs; of his friends principally. On the other hand, let me say, that I went (thinking of you solely) and was done the other day, and will send a copy to you immediately. It looks absurd; but I must conclude it faithful. . . .

You have had particulars of our travels; at least, items. Munich is a glorious city to pass through, and the Tyrol a wonderful country for the same. I had, the truth is, a miserable walking companion. He couldn't walk in the sun: he wouldn't walk after its setting: the rain he shunned as if he had been dog-bitten—in fact, he was a double-knapsack on my back. Certainly the heat was tremendous. The Tyrolean men are the handsomest I have seen: the women the ugliest. The Alps gave me shudderings of delight; but I did not see enough of them, and I can't bear being coop'd long in those mountain-guarded valleys; so I shot through them in two weeks, and then saw Italy for the first time, emerging by Adige, which the Austrians are fortifying continually. Verona lies just under the Alps, and is now less a City than a fortress. You see nothing but white coats—who form the majority of the inhabitants. The little man [1] asked innumerable questions about the amphitheatre, and the gladiators, the shows, and the Roman customs. Thence to Venice, where he and I were alone—W—— parting for Como and his mother. Our life in Venice was charming. Only I had to watch the dear boy like tutor, governess, courier, in one; and couldn't get much to the pictures; for there was no use in victimising him and dragging him to see them, and I couldn't quit him at all. We hired a

[1] Arthur.

Gondola and floated through the streets at night, or out to Malamocco to get the fresh breeze. A fresh Levant wind favoured our visit. To the Lido we went every morning: Arthur and I bathing—behold us for a solid hour under enormous straw-hats floating and splashing in the delicious Adriatic. The difficulty of getting him out of it was great. 'Papa, what a dear old place this is! We won't go, will we?' I met and made acquaintance with some nice fellows (Austrians) in the water. The Italian fish are not to be found where they are. Venice looks draped, and wears her widow's weeds ostentatiously. Our Gondolier, Lorenzo, declared that he had seen Lor Birren, when a boy. 'Palazzo Mocenigo, Signor Ecco!' On the Lido one thinks sadly of Byron and Shelley. I found the spot Shelley speaks of in 'Julian and Maddalo,' where he saw the Vicenza hills in the sunset through the bell-tower where the lunatics abide, on an island. Of the glories of St. Mark's who shall speak. It is poetry, my dear, and will be expressed in no other way. In Venice I learnt to love Giorgione, Titian and Paul Veronese. I cannot rank Tintoret with them (Ruskin puts him highest) though his single work shows greater grasp and stretch of soul. Viennese crinoline and the tyrant white coat do their best to destroy the beauties of St. Mark's. Charming are the Venetian women! They have a gracious walk and all the manner one dreams of as befitting them. Should one smile on a Whitecoat, she has the prospect of a patriotic dagger smiting her fair bosom, and so she does not; though the Austrians are fine men, and red-hot exclusiveness for an abstract idea sits not easy on any ladies of any land for longer than—say a fortnight. Consequently Vienna sends Crinoline to her children. I made acquaintance with a tough Baronne, who had brought two daughters of immense circle! How quietly the pretty

Venetians eyed them! The square of St. Mark's is the great parade.—The weather was fiery: but we had no mosquitos.—Milan is, for heat, next door to Pandemonium. The view from the Cathedral you have heard of. I went to Como to see W——, who was with Il Principessa. She received me affably at the Villa—Villa Ciani, près d'Este. She has a handsome daughter, fair as a highborn English girl, engaged then, and since married, to General T——. Madame la Princesse will be Mdme. la Princesse, and desires that she should hear it too, as I quickly discovered. I grew in favour. She has no difficulty in swallowing a compliment. Quantity is all she asks for. This is entre nous, for she entertained me, and indeed I was vastly entertained. Look for it all in a future chapter. A good gross compliment, fluently delivered, I find to be the best adapted to a Frenchwoman's taste. If you hesitate, the flavour evaporates for them. Be glib, and you may say what you please. Should you in addition, be neat, and ready, they will fall in love with you. Mademoiselle the fiancée, perceived that I was taken with her before I had felt it. Hence she distinguished me, till the General came. It 's a real love match. She wouldn't sing then—couldn't. Nor did I press it: for Oh!—She sings in the rapid French style: all from the throat: and such a hard metallic Giordigianic rang over Como's water as sure our dear old Muddy Mole never knew of! Young Captain G——, T——'s aide-de-camp, and I, then fell upon the Princess.

King Victor gave T—— some royal Tokay, which he brought to the Villa, and we were merry over it. I like G——, a very gallant fellow: only 24, and served through the Hungarian revolt, and all the Garibaldian campaign.

Before dinner we all bathed in Como, ladies and gentlemen ensemble. Really pleasant and pastoral! Mdlle.

swims capitally: rides and drives well; and will make a good hero's wife. She scorns the English for their bad manners, she told me. The Emperor allows her £1000 a year: her mother gets £2000. Vive l'Empereur! . . .

Thence over the Mont Cenis to Paris. The little man was in raptures at the thought of crossing the Alps. He would barely close his eyes. I had him in my arms in the coupé of the diligence, and then he was starting up every instant, shouting, and crowing till dawn; when I had no chance of getting him to sleep. When we reached Macon at night I put him to bed, and gave him a little weak coffee in bed. He slept like a top till morning: when to Paris, which you know. Arthur was impatient to be home, and cared little for Paris. I gave him a dinner at Vefours and at the Trois Frères. He appreciated it: but longed for England. Paris is delightful! Under the circumstances, with a remonstrating little man, there was nothing for it but to return hastily. Thank Heaven! I got him home safe—a little worn: but he soon got over that and has improved his young mind considerably. The journey did me good. I am much stronger, and am beginning to be able to work much better, but have to be careful.

I have left Emilia Belloni untouched for months; and my novel is where it was. En revanche, I am busy on Poems. I think it possible I shall publish a small volume in the winter, after Christmas. I have had letters from strangers, begging me to do so. One man, headmaster of a Grammar School,[1] writes a six-page letter of remonstrance and eulogy, concluding, 'I have often said I wished to see 3 men before I died: Humboldt, who is gone: Bunsen, whom I had the fortune to meet: and ——!' Guess, my dear! He says that the 'Enchantress' scene in Rd. Feverel made him ill for 24 hours: and that he and

[1] Augustus Jessopp.

his friends (Cambridge men) rank me next to Tennyson in poetic power: and so forth. I tell Janet this, because I know she will like to hear it. I listen to it merely as a sign that I am beginning to be a little known. The man praises my first book of verse, which I would have forgotten. 'Grandfather Bridgeman'—an idyll: true to English life, and containing a war episode, approved by friends who have heard it; 'The Old Chartist,' 'The Patriot Engineer,' 'Phantasy,' 'A Love-Match,' and 'Cassandra' (about to be illustrated by Rossetti), are among my later pieces. When these are out I shall set myself seriously to work on a long poem. For if I have the power to do it, why should I not? I am engaged in extra pot-boiling work, which enables me to do this; and besides I can sell my poems. What do you think? Speak on this point.

My housekeeper, good Miss Grange, has just had an offer from Claremont to go and attend the Princess Françoise: and I am afraid she 'll go; which will be a complete upset here: for she 's an invaluable person: excellent temper, spotless principles, indefatigable worker, no sex: thoughtful, prudent, and sensible. Where shall I get such another? Of course I can't advise her to stay. It 's a terrible bother.—They have been hunting a little; but the Prince de Joinville has not yet returned from America, so not much is done in that way. What do you think of the Comte de Paris' step? I can excuse him better than his adviser. He was courteous and kind to me here (Maxse introduced me), and so I wish him well—and therefore well out of it.—Let me hear what you think of Buckle, who has become a topic.

My dear! the well is not empty, but the bucket kicks. I have some things to do before I speak of them; but I dare say I shall see you before I offer you your wedding present. I hate offering mere jewelry. I have thought

of half a dozen things: but your mother's illness and inability to go to London prevented the likeliest. I have sent books, etc. to Sir Alec to forward when he can. Be sure my heart is very faithfully with you. You know I approve of the man you have chosen so much that I pardon him his mortal offence.—Talking of that, Alice, who was P——, writes to her father from S. of France, that she 'thinks marriage a fine institution, and wonders who invented it.' I heard this repeated before some men, who thought it fast, and clever.—May all good be with you and yours!

Frederick Chapman is just married.—Your book is being well reviewed. I hope Lewis will do it in the 'Saturday.'

To a Friend engaged to be married.

COPSHAM, ESHER, SURREY, 1861.

MY DEAR ——, 'Tannhäuser' was in yesterday's 'Post,' and exceedingly well done. I read the extracts also. They produce on me the effect, after three lines, of too much sugar on the palate: something rich, certainly, but of a base richness. I don't agree with you that they have brought Venus sensibly to the reader at all, tho' it 's fair to say that with Elizabeth it is less so than Venus. The former is a prim good miss, a shrew when in a passion; she quite justifies (to me) Tannhäuser's choice of the dear voluptuous Goddess whom they call such naughty names, and who, I begin to think, is the favourite daughter of Mother Earth.

This to you, who are in love, and well in love!—Do you know, I have seldom seen anything with so much pleasure as your honest, modest, manly love for her. You don't tire me in telling me about it, and of your

feelings, and your thoughts about her. The fonder and the deeper your emotions reach, the more I see and admire the large nature you are gifted with.

I trust it may be that Heaven brings the other half of her. She is, I am sure, a very sweet person: but how strong she is, or can be made, my instinct does not fathom. I am so miserably constituted now that I can't love a woman if I do not feel her soul, and that there is force therein to wrestle with the facts of life (called the Angel of the Lord). But I envy those who are attracted by what is given to the eye;—yes, even those who have a special taste for woman flesh, and this or that particular little tit-bit—I envy them! It lasts not beyond an hour with me.

Happy you with all the colour of life about you! Has she principle? Has she any sense of responsibility? Has she courage? Enough that you love her. I believe that this plan of taking a woman on the faith of a mighty wish for her, is the best, and the safest way to find the jewel we are all in search of. As to love 'revealing' all the qualities in one great flash—do you believe it even in your present state? Still of so fair and exquisite a person it is just to augur hopefully; and when one comes to read her face, surely that is a book with plates of virgin silver. Well! of her face I will tell you, without trying to make you too happy, that I don't know any face the memory of which leaves with me the unique impression of music so completely. There is that softness in the curves, and purity of look, which move like music in my mind.

As to her singing qualities, that is another matter, and really I had forgotten. But on coming to consider this, there's something right in one—a woman—who knows her capabilities to be not brilliant, sitting down to do her duty at the piano to pass the evening properly.

Some fair ones would have declined resolutely. For my part I like simple, gentle, unpretending songs, and shall be always glad of the privilege of hearing them.

Health somewhat better. Working on pomes. You will find some alterations, much for the better, I think.

Rossetti admires your beloved, tho' she has not green eyes and carrots; which, I tell him, astonishes me.

He sent me a book of MSS. original poetry the other day, and very fine are some of the things in it. He is a poet, without doubt. He would please you more than I do, or can, for he deals with essential poetry, and is not wild, and bluff, and coarse; but rich, refined, royal-robed! Swinburne read me the other day his French novel 'La Fille du Policeman': the funniest rampings of satire on French novelists dealing with English themes that you can imagine. One chapter, 'Ce qui peut se passer dans un Cab Safety,' where Lord Whitestick, Bishop of Londres, ravishes the heroine, is quite marvellous. But he is not subtle; and I don't see any internal centre from which springs anything that he does. He will make a great name, but whether he is to distinguish himself solidly as an Artist, I would not willingly prognosticate.

Rossetti is going to illustrate my Cassandra, which pome has taken his heart.

I am obliged to make money as I can, to meet these new claims on me, and so all my pieces must be published before they're collected. Your name, you know, may be withheld from the Dedication then if you please.

To William Hardman.

ESHER, *Nov.* 25, 1861.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Stop! What do you mean by smoking ½ a dozen cigars of the Holy Man in solitary enjoyment. Give unto thy brother a chance of conversion, even upon Friday evening next. And will you have my glove in Gordon Street? 'Twill save me 2s., which is, to a poet, no mean sum. I suppose Mrs. Hardman has gone. I hope she will not have trouble. When she returns, may Copsham hail you both! We have all weathers here. I am at my Pomes.

PS.—Did not the telegram read as if the Northerners had got another licking?

To Captain Maxse.

COPSHAM, ESHER.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—You knew how glad it would make me to hear the good news, and I thank you for making me feel that she does not take you away from those who love you. I don't think there will be a war. I don't even think that the withdrawal of our Ambassador would give the signal for one. In any case there can be no reason why you should go. Dismiss the notion. A war with France would tax all the energies of this country. All would have to serve. . . . So be married quickly to that dear and sweet person who is to make you happy, I doubt not. I look at her and should envy you, if I did not feel for her through your heart.—I mean the photograph, which I prize.—De Stendhal I have had to send to Paris for. You will have 'L'Amour' in a week. I told them (Hachette) to send it to you, from me. Write as often as you can spare time. Give her my kindest salute and know me, your loving

GEORGE M.

I have done a great deal of the 'Love-Match.' Rossetti says it's my best. I contrast it mentally with yours, which is so very much better!

To Captain Maxse.

LONDON, 1861.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I will come. So shall the little man. I hate wedding-breakfasts, which make one take wine and eat I don't know what at unholy seasons of the day, and are such a stupid exhibition of the couple.

Tell me when you think it may take place, that I may keep all clear for that day. I'm sure you're going to be happy, and I'm like Keats and the nightingale—'happy in your happiness.'—I wonder, now, whether any nice woman will ever look on me?—I certainly begin to feel new life. Also a power of work, which means money. There is evidently great folly kindling in me. All the effect of example!

I have matters in hand, which you will like, I think. They won't drag you down to the Roadside and the haunts of vagabonds!

How do you like de Stendhal? L'Amour ought not to be dissected, and indeed can't be. For when we've killed it with this object, the spirit flies, and then where is L'Amour? Still I think de Stendhal very subtle and observant. He goes over ground that I know. Let me hear.—I bow to your lovely bride. The photograph is not just to her. All blessings on you both!—Your loving,

GEORGE M.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

C-

MY DEAR SIR,—I know Souvestre tolerably well, and have not hitherto cared much about him. Some of his

Breton Sketches I have found repulsive. But I thank you for your edition, which has been forwarded to me in your name, and I will read the story you indicate.

As I said, my cottage here is of the very humblest kind: so much so that I hesitate to ask ladies to come to it, though there are some who do me that honour. You will find me about as plain a man as you could meet. I do not know many literary men myself: those I do know are among the best: and they are not guilty of overbearing brilliancy at all:—unless, haply, one should be conscious of a sucking Boswell at the elbow, which is a rare case, and is possibly seductive. The general feeling is, that it is best to let 'good things' come as they may, and thus the best point of breeding attained: all have even chance, and one man does not draw a reputation at the expense of the others. Believe me, I have as great a respect for a good scholar, as you have for a man who writes books.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *Dec.* 17, 1861.

DEAR HARDMAN,—Rossetti talks of meeting good fellows on Thursday evening. Therefore, do not take stalls anywhere or make engagements till you are cocksure you would not rather go to the artists. It has struck me that Schubert meant that words should be affixed to the Introduction to the Addio. A moment's reflection supplies them, e.g.

tūm tūm tūm tūm dĕ tūm measure.

Don't you see it? With this warning, you and I and many a poor devil might have been on our guard. Perhaps safe! which to contemplate is wondrous. At any

rate, I think our sex ought to demand to have it sung as a piece of preliminary fair play.—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

COPSHAM COTTAGE,
Dec. 20, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR,—How happy you that have a Pallas! I will not envy you. I will hope that she also will visit me in the flesh. She is not supposed to visit poets in the spirit.

Apropos of her poetical counsel, is she adapting her wisdom to the mind of the British matron, and of the snuffling moralist so powerful among us? Does she know that my literary reputation is tabooed as worse than libertine in certain virtuous Societies? . . . that there have been meetings to banish me from book-clubs? And that Pater familias has given Mr. Mudie a very large bit of his petticoated mind concerning me?—These are matters to be thought over. In the way of Art I never stop to consider what is admissible to the narrow minds of the drawing-room. But is it well to call up what is marked for oblivion? Isn't it a sort of challenge; and an unnecessary one?

I think I will not publish in Macmillan, seeing that my volume is shortly to appear. I have had a suggestion to that effect, once or twice, from a brother-in-law of Macmillan's.

I can only regret that the weather was so bad when you were with me, and trust it will be brighter when you next do me the favour to come.—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

London, *Jan.* 1862.

My dear Maxse,—I send you a portion of proofs of the Tragedy of Modern Love. There are wanting to complete it, 13 more sonnets.

Please read, and let me have the honest judgment. When done with, return. This poem will come in the middle of the book.

I called on Borthwick[1] to-day, but could not see him. I shall call again to-day, if possible. If not, next week.

I say, you 'll review my Poems in the M. Post? You may flog me, too, if the prompting comes to do it.

I suppose the book will be out in six weeks.—Who was right about the Yankees?

How are you, my dear fellow? I feel rather anxious to know, and but that I 'm in such a mess and might stumble across some of your people, I would call.

By the way, tell me, do army men—ensigns, fight in undress uniform? Did any at Inkermann? Or is the full dress de rigueur?—Your faithful

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

Jan. 8, 1862.

My dear Hardman,—Again cruel Fate has deferred the junction of our loving couple. He has got her cold; 'through sympathy,' he says. They communicate their tender impressions in sneezes. Maurice you may remember, sings of 'Two red roses across the Moon,' but —— seems to think that two red noses across a honeymoon would spoil the lustre of the orb. He may be right. On purely material grounds, and apart from sentiment, I should say that where a sneeze is to be apprehended

[1] Algernon Borthwick—later Lord Glenesk, and owner of the *Morning Post.*

it is better to hold back. Picture it to yourself! It is a very butchering of Cupid. I presume you come on Saturday. I had arranged for the Virtues to lunch here, and for us to walk back with them and dine, this Saturday. It may be arranged a fortnight subsequently. . . .

Sons have been over to Oatlands. His love is sent to Nellie: but just at present I think she must consent to share it with Miss V. who is in the ascendant.

Jessopp comes next week. He has asked me whether I taboo tobacco? 'Fore God! This is of noble augury! What say you?

To Mrs. Janet Ross.

Copsham Cottage,
Esher, *Feb.* 15, 1862.

My dear Janet,—You come in April. You are even now packing and preparing, and your heart is bounding for England. So I will hope the best of you, my dear child, though your letters have saddened me and I see that your physical condition is lowered. I never liked the climate for you, though I perfectly approved of the husband. After all, it 's merely a probation, not a settlement. There has been little hunting here this winter owing to the absence of the Princess of Orleans. The weather is good for it; the frosts are short, and the ground soft and wet, and not too much so. Haven't you heard from the P.G. yet? He said he would write, and abused his P.G. reputation, but I always have suspected him to have something of a woman's nature, id est: he must see a body to be with a body. Now, you can't say that of me! What do you think (as the proof the other way)? I was walking out with Hardman (the man being absent from his wife), and I commenced 'la—la——la—la——' and so on, ending 'la—

la—la—ti—to—te!' in my fine voice, when he cried 'Halloa!' and I meekly responded 'That 's my spooney song.' 'And it 's mine!' quoth he. 'The song that always made me sentimental,' said I. 'The song that bowled me over,' said he. I told him with a yawn (noble manhood's mask for a sigh), that I had written words to it. He and his wife petition for them. So, please, to spare me from having to write fresh ones, send me, if you have them, a copy of my lines to Schubert's Adieu. If you have any objection don't do it.

Maxse is not the man you saw with me in Esher. That was Fitzgerald. Maxse is quite a different fellow. He performed the celebrated ride in the Crimea, as Lord Lyons' aide-de-camp! . . . By the way, I write for the 'Morning Post' now at odd hours, which pays your poet. And I 've a volume of poems coming out in three weeks: but I won't send the volume. You shall have it when you come. Jessopp, the man I spoke of as liking my works, has been here—did I tell you? He begged to be allowed to educate Arthur at his own expense, and under his own supervision. The kindness was great, but I could not let him be at the charge while I have power to work, you know. I like him very much and so would you. Can you meet him in Paris? Nothing would please me better. But I fear I can't leave my pen. Borthwick promises me introductions there. It would be pleasant, I will see. . . .—Your faithful GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *March* 17, 1862.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—You are well out of this weather. Myself am in appearance much like the atmosphere; in sentiment I am due East. King Aeolus holds his court within me. I feel as one who has run a gallant

race ½ way to perdition, and thinks of returning as far as he can before the final Trump shall sound to him.

Last night came off the Raffle. I record it. Sons got the number 35. Yourself and Demitroïa respectively 36 and 37. Walford 18. Morison and spouse about 30 I think. I had two throws, first 29 and second 41. The Granges 39; the Claremont people 38. Lo! G. M. is the winner of what he does not want at all. So it happens! If Demitroïa won't have the thing, it shall go to Miss Grange. . . .

I hope to hear good news of Demitroïa. If not, you can no longer as a man decline to open a vein and supply her from your abundance. I confess I am astonished that you have not volunteered to do so.—Your faithful

George Meredith.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

Esher, *March* 24, 1862.

My dear Mr. Jessopp,—My boy thanks you heartily for the book of verse. He delays to write himself, he says, until he has read it through, and can speak sagely on the subject. Of this you will approve.—He, let me tell you, is not a 'George,' but is 'Arthur Gryffydd.'—I must say I think the selection very Patmorian, but it's a pleasant book for a boy, and this little man reads it with pleasure. The sentimental pieces, of course, affect him the least; for he is a natural fellow, and I never trouble the roots of him. Dibdin is almost his favourite: he recites the lines on Sir Sidney Smith gleefully.

Apropos of Praxaspes, shame on me! I had to hunt him up. My old impression of him, and my new, differ. Duty is a fine heroic business; but a man should be a slave to nothing. P. was a slave to his conception of this virtue. What! he serves the man who slaughters his son: he takes pride in being faithful to the dynasty of

a madman!—I give my sympathies to the persecuted Magi.

Praxaspes might be cast in the form of a monologue. But, you see I am on the other side.

Does Mrs. Jessopp really mean to visit me? Does she know the sort of place she will be coming to? She will do me great honour and make me very happy, but I desire that she be distinctly aware of what she must undergo in a hut—for this roof that covers me is nothing more. Does she not travel in Switzerland?—She can then rough hardship.—Let me know when I may expect you, if you hold by this good resolve.

My book hangs a little. I am sick of the sight of it. A council of friends say that the Rosanna poem must be published, as embodying something of me!—Of the old volume nothing will appear.

To William Hardman.

March 24, 1862.

Dear Friend,—I feel for you in your profound affliction. Has she returned? Pardon my asking. You break out beautifully into dishes and show a lovely and most becoming bravado. . . . 'And every dog shall have his day,' Old Song.

Morison [1] did not come. He was right. But, oh, what a day this day! How I wish you were here to wander about. The smell of the earth is Elysian. I am really not tauntin' you. On Wednesday I will come to your desolate household if the South wind does not blow—with what different feelings.—Your ever faithful

George Meredith.

Bill for fly to Oatlands 5/ just come in. I promised to tell you, and I am a man of my word.

[1] James Cotter Morison, familiarly termed 'St. Bernard,' author of a *Life of St. Bernard*, and later of *The Service of Man*, etc.

To William Hardman.

March 25, 1862.

My dear Hardman,—Please do not expect me positively to-morrow. I may call on Thursday: but what I want to do is to go with you and Demitroïa to the Monday Popular Concerts to hear Joachim, and music, since your infernal alterations stop all that at home. . . . And yet, supposing I am weak and come to-morrow! You may turn me back from the door without giving offence, for I shall know I have deserved it; and I shall have the imperial luxury of one who, from the couch of indolence, surveys the Realms of Bliss.

By the way, a letter from Alexandria. My Janet refuses to give the verses, unless I stringently insist; 'for,' says she, 'they were composed for me and me alone, and I don't want to lose the sense of their being peculiar to myself' . . . Can I insist?—I must e'en write Demitaunton a new set of verse.

PS.—I really think I shall come. But don't expect me.

To William Hardman.

April 22, 1862.

My dear Hardman,—Thanks for your services. . . . I let the thing pass. Let the public drive me to a 2nd edition, if they want further alterations.

Friendliest Tuck! I dine with you at the hour you please to name on Thursday. You will decide about Chapman. It's a matter of policy simply. Let me know. If we dissipate subsequently we should dine at 5.30,—if not at 6.

I say! Poor dear old Morison! I suppose you have heard of his purl? Horse went down with him on high road and precipitated the horse and St. Bernard in the

dust, which was nearly stopping flow of same. All 's well that ends well! But one feels one likes him warmly when there is a note of danger. He has been shaken considerably—had a slight fever, and is without his strength, though he managed to walk to me yesterday. I walked back with him. He had to take fly at Walton station.

To Captain Maxse.

COPSHAM, ESHER.

Is it the same sky over us? Mine is of the grimmest grey, with a fog-lining. The daffodil in the meadow has been nodding to this genial wind for the last two weeks: and now we have the pen-bird heralding the cuckoo, and I suppose summer is coming: but we are all in suspense to know whether we are to get a daily ducking or live the life of non-purgatorial beings through the months. Last Sunday there was a puff of sunshine. I walked with a couple of fellows to Box Hill. What changes since last year! I looked over the hilly Dorking road we traversed. It wound away for other footsteps. Well!—you at least have nothing to regret. I hope the sunshine will cling to you.

The Naples correspondent of the 'Times' gives a horrible account of the state of the country, and rather alarms one about you: but having so precious a charge to protect you won't be rash, I 'm sure.—Of course, you have heard all about the Monitor and Merrimac. A pretty business sea-fighting comes to! Was there ever so devilish an entertainment! Blood bursting from the eyes and ears of the men at the guns, who seemed to be under the obligation of knocking their own senses to atoms as a preliminary to sending the souls of their foes to perdition. If they want me to go on board such

vessels, I plead with Charles Lamb, 'Lance, and a coward.'—The whole business affects the imagination awfully: but in reality an old sea-fight was a far bloodier business. Science, I presume, will at last put it to our option whether we will improve one another from off the face of the globe, and we must decide by our common sense.

Read John Mill on 'Liberty' the other day; and recommend it to you. It 's a splendid protest against the tyranny society is beginning to exercise; very noble and brave.

The book will be out the Monday after Easter. I sent with Borthwick as many of the proofs as I could collect; thinking you would have no time to review in Rome. But, if you have not done it, let me beg you to be in no hurry. The book can wait. You will find one or two poems that you have not seen. The 'Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn' may please you.

I heard from Borthwick of the Violet's charming adventure with the Emperor, and can picture it.

What you say about Christianity arresting sensualism, is very well: but the Essenian parentage of Christianity was simply asceticism. Hitherto human nature has marched through the conflict of extremes. With the general growth of reason, it will be possible to choose a path mid-way. Paganism no doubt deserved the ascetic reproof; but Christianity failed to supply much that it destroyed. Pompeii, as being, artistically, a Grecian Colony merely, cannot represent the higher development of Paganism.

Alas! I fear I shall not join you in Venice.—By the way, take care to get an introduction to Rawdon Brown, while there. He has lived and worked at the Archives in Venice for 20 years, and can tell you more of the place than any other man. I hear he is also a good fellow.

Pray, give my kindest regards to your Cecilia. I am flattered to hear that Englishmen stand so high with her now that she can make comparisons.—Write soon; and know me ever, your faithful GEORGE M.

In Venice read 'Julian and Maddalo.' It is one of Shelley's best: admirable for simplicity of style, ease, beauty of description and local truth. The philosophy, of course, you may pass.

To William Hardman.

May 2, 1862.

Such Weather.
And at Copsham no Tuck!
Anathema!
Spoken by the poet on receiving
Tuck's
Card: May 2nd, 1862.

'May his company find him utterly dull, and he his company!

'May he hear good things and not comprehend them!

'May he long in anguish to laugh, and when the laugh comes, may he forget the cause thereof, and go seeking for it, for the remainder of his years, with the aspect of such a seeker!

'May Demitroïa exclaim, "I am of a different opinion from William"!!!'

(Climax attained.)
(Close of Anathema.)

Went to Exhibition on opening Day with Borthwick. Crush. Saw everything. . . . Dined with Morison and Hicks, and drank Hocks, etc. Anticipated seeing you, cock-certain, to-morrow. Will never believe your cock-

certain again!—Book to be delivered this evening or to-morrow. Has subscribed wonderfully well. In spite of all.—Your loving GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *May* 5, 1862.

MADRIGAL

'Since Tuck is Faithless Found'

Since Tuck is faithless found, no more
I'll trust to man or maid;
I'll sit me down, a hermit hoar,
Alone in Copsham shade.

The sight of all I shun;
Far-spying from the mound;
I'll be at home no more,
Since Tuck,
Since Tu-a tu-a tu-a
Tuia Tuck,
Since Tuck is faithless found.

Oh! what a glorious day. I have done lots of Emilia, and am now off to Ripley, or St. Demitroïa hill, or Tuck's Height, carolling. I snap my fingers at you. And yet, dear Tuck, what would I give to have you here. The gorse is all ablaze, the meadows are glorious—green, humming all day. Nightingales throng. Heaven, blessed blue amorous Heaven, is hard at work upon our fair, wanton, darling old naughty Mother Earth.

Come, dear Tuck, and quickly, or I must love a woman, and be ruined. Answer me, grievous man!

In thine ear!—Asparagus is ripe at Ripley. In haste. —Your constantly loving friend, GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM HERMITAGE, *May* 6, 1862.

I dare say! You know how badly you have behaved, and now you praise the poet and cajole the man! Is it Tuck that sends me a letter of this kind?—Not a word of repentance for a promise foully broken. No appointment for—or let me say, expression of humble desire, to receive pardon of, Copsham in the flesh next Saturday. I won't come to you on Tuesday. I will emit fresh Anathemas! Read next page, or no; rhyme is more kindly.

Tune: 'Johnny's too late for the Fair.'

Tuck! Tuck! Once you would flatter me,
Saying that I in due season should fatter be.
Here is Asparagus—what can the matter be?
Why don't you join in the Fair?

Ripley's the place with the jolly old Talbot Inn,
Once we two passed there, you know, and were all but in.
Rhyme now commands me to throw here a small 'but' in.
Why don't you join in the Fair?

I saw the Japanese at the Exhibition on Thursday last. This Thursday I dine with the 'Once a Week' people, and shall ask Hamilton for a bed.[1] I won't come to you unless I can be more with you. Now, please come down for some days in this magnificent weather. The nightingales are at their best. I went to see St. Demitrola's Hill yesterday, and saw the great Irrational—the Crystal, Walford's Domicile, Harrow, Windsor, Berks, Bucks,

[1] N. E. S. A. Hamilton of the MSS. Department, British Museum, 1852-1872, author of *The Shakespearean Question*, 1860.

Hants, Hogs Back. Mon Dieu! And no Tuck near! To Demitroïa all kindness.—Still (through weakness of resolve) your loving GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *May* 18, 1862.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What 's a continual feast?

A. A day given up to Tuck.

Q. Why am I of a most vigorous capacity of digestion?

A. Because I never can have too much of Tuck.

Q. Is it true that an Alderman before he finishes his day must necessarily take a bracing walk?

A. Necessarily so; for he makes the circuit of Tuck!

Confound the Press for its impudence in calling me the pupil of anybody! Never mind: if we do but get the public ear, Oh, my dear old boy!—I rejoice to think that I may soon have you, but grieve for Demitroïa. Come on Tuesday, if you can; 'cause Wednesday is the day before Black Thursday when George Pegasus, Esq. goes into harness and understands what donkeys feel when they are driven. Also, arrange, if it seemeth fit to you, for a walk with Hinchliffe, or alone for Saturday next: or arrange to come to me. As you will.

Gathering up my soul in its might, I say (and damn all consequences) my love to Demitroïa! There!

GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

COPSHAM, ESHER, *June* 9, 1862.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I look about vainly for a long letter already written to you; but it 's as good as nowhere. I must trust you to know yourself constantly in my thoughts. But I feel that you are quite at peace

and as a river embayed, a deep quiet mirror to illimitable skies. Shall I stir my mind about the Elect? Let them walk in their Paradise! So, though I think of you, it is as one under seal; fixed, stamped, monotonously certain of his fate. This destroys all sequence of ideas in me. I revert inevitably to the original proposition—'He has aimed and hit the mark.' All around him now is empty babble. However, I will talk, for you may be beginning to sigh for a breath of England. Ah me! how I would wish to be with you, if wishing availed. But I must work on, and it is just now imperative, or nothing would keep me from Venice and you at this season, or from Italy and you. I know we should feel together on so much there; and then sunshine means ten times more with sweet companionship.—I am working at Emilia Belloni. Health is so-so—it has been pretty good. What works I could throw off if I had the digestion of any of the creatures that hope to be saved! I am fretted with so much in my head that my hands can't accomplish. The other day I walked with a good fellow whom you should know (his wife would make a charming companion for St. Cecilia) to Mickleham, after dinner. There we slept. Next morning early we took our old route—over Dorking to Wotton: round Evelyn's grounds on to Shere, then on the downs to St. Martha's: thence to Guildford, Godalming, Milford, to the little Inn where you heard the nightingales and were ravished by them. After that my friend limped, so we had to return the day following, by train.

I hope, by the way, your review won't be written before you see the book. One poem, new to you (Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn), will please you better than all—please you specially. It will suffice for me if you tell me what you think of it, and not the public. The notices that have appeared fix favourably on the Road-

side poems, but discard 'Modern Love,' which, I admit, requires thought, and discernment, and reading more than once. The Saturday R. has not yet spoken. One paper calls me a genuine one, a meretricious, clever, bold man. I find, to my annoyance, that I am suscepttible to remarks on my poems, and criticisms from whipsters or women absolutely make me wince and flush. I saw Robert Browning the other day, and he expressed himself 'astounded at the originality, delighted with the naturalness and beauty.'—Pardon my egotism—I write to please you!

I have not yet seen Gibson's Venus. I went to the Int. Ex. on the opening day have delayed to go since. It was a poor unimpressive show. Fancy the Poet Laureate in the line of march!

June 13.—Your letter from Lucca:—You complain of sun. The S.W. has been blowing since the middle of May, and this year has not yet known one day of sunshine.—Rossetti is beginning to ask about your Lady, to know when he may have a sitting. He, dear fellow, is better—still somewhat shaken. Mention it not—he buried his MSS. poems in his wife's coffin, it is whispered. He, his brother, and Swinburne, have taken a house (Sir T. More's) at Chelsea: a strange, quaint, grand old place, with an immense garden, magnificent panelled staircases and rooms,—a palace. I am to have a bedroom for my once-a-week visits. We shall have nice evenings there, and I hope you 'll come. . . .—The Notices of my book are scarce worth sending. The 'Spectator' abuses me. The 'Athenæum' mildly pats me on the back: the 'Parthenon' blows a trumpet about me: the 'Sat. R.' makes no sign.—Whatever number of books you may like to have, pray accept as your own. Is not mine yours, in all things? I would prefer that you should not buy books of mine. That is for the good public to do.

I wish particularly to be kept au courant of your change of abode: there 's no knowing what I might do, on the spur. Whither in Switzerland do you go, first? I presume, across the Italian Lakes, and over the Splügen to Lucerne. Be careful of the waters of that lake: at some points it is dangerous at any moment.—Tell me, don't you find that great heat somewhat narrows and sharpens the reflective power? The effect, in Southern climates, on Art, is to sacrifice all to outline, as a rule, and murder detail. Even during the short time I was in Italy I experienced this in a small degree. If the passions did but slumber, Italy would be the very spot of earth for great work to be done. Here!—I should like to try it.—I have a comedy germinating in the brain, of the Classic order: 'The Sentimentalists.' I fancy it will turn out well. 'Emilia Belloni' goes slowly forward, for the reason that I have re-written it: so, all will be new to you. I shall send you the Cornhill Mag. next month. Adam Bede has a new work in it. I understand they have given her an enormous sum (£8000, or more! she retaining ultimate copyright) —Bon Dieu! will aught like this ever happen to me?—Shall you stay long at Turin?—Of all the horrible cities! Two or three days at Milan will give you quite enough of the pet Italian city: go to the Brera: and see Leonardo's wrecked Last Supper. On Como stop at Bellagio—not at the Villa d'Este: the hotel is good at the latter place, but the scenery is not so fine. . . .—Your constant loving

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

June 18, 1862.

Well-beloved Tuck!—(Though I know I am out.) 9th progressive station of Ginger Beer to eventful Pop, passed pleasantly. Your kind recognition of it was

received by me with loud exclamation of delight. Come on Saturday, I prithee. But excuse my attendance on Friday. I am obliged to be here, and indeed, notwithstanding your taunts, Copsham is worth a visit just now. The roses and the Romford ale are in their finest condition. —In haste, your faithful

ROBIN SELKIRK
Island of Juan Fernandez, Copsham.

My homage to Demitroïa as ever.

Menu approved; but to send it now, when the feast is over! Am I embracing a phantom! Does my mouth water for a corpse! Does not the favourite poet of WE say 'Look not mournfully into the past'! You make me.

To Captain Maxse.

COPSHAM, ESHER, *June* 23, 1862.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I write in haste, a short note, on the chance of speaking to you before you leave Turin. Your article has appeared in the 'Post.' It is very good: but do you think it? You should have whipped me on the score of the absurdities, obscurities, and what not. I feel that you have been sparing me, and though I don't love the rod, I don't cry mercy. I'm exceedingly sorry that you did not review from the book. The Ode to the Spirit of Earth will, if I mistake not, catch hold of you. I will see that notices of the Poems are forwarded to you. But let me know your route and resting-places.—Tell me when you write, whether your scenic faculty has been excited, and by what.—I am at work on Emilia Belloni, and bringing her more to your taste. I have remodelled the whole—making the background more agreeable and richer comedy. I have an immense quantity of work in store. Prose, poetry: a comedy (The Sentimentalists), etc. Health is still weak and will

never be much, I fear, unless I can purchase two years' perfect rest and travel.—B. W—— came the other day: 'acknollodged' his foregone errors, and hoped for forgiveness: 'Me deer Mardith,' etc.!—He hopes to get some property now. I fear he is in a prospective mess. His present one is without dispute. I helped him to the best of my ability, and he departed, praising me, magnifying me.—Fred Chapman, you know, is married. He goes to Florence in September. Tom Trollope (who lives there) tells me that September is a delicious month for Florence, the best in the year.—What are your plans about the winter? Don't fail to let me know, because, if you are in Italy in early Spring next,—say, Feb.-March to June, I will come over, as I desire to breathe that air with you. —I have not yet been to the International a second time.

Are you writing anything beyond impressions or voyages?—What you told me once on that head (that I have influenced you against your own compositions, acting so as to check you) weighs upon me sadly, now and then. I know you will be happier if you write, and I am convinced you will, if you choose, write a good book. Pray, don't put aside that old and excellent ambition of yours. You will miss a friend.

I begin to yearn to see you—just as I did when in Tyrol. You will get a sentimental poem this time.

You hear all about the Yankees and politics, of course.

Read 'Les Misérables,' if you can get it. Six vols. are out. It is conceived in pure black and white. It is, nevertheless, the master work of fiction of this century—as yet. There are things in it quite wonderful.

I bow my head to your dear Lady, praying that her health may be improved, and am, your loving

George Meredith.

My dear boy is quite well, flourishes wonderfully.

To William Hardman.

July 12, 1862.

MY DEAR FIRST PERSON PLURAL,—I wish I could come to you. The rolling seasons seem to have gone round thrice since I (I forgot whom I was addressing), shook your hands.

I remember one Tuck, a jovial soul, a man after my own heart, whom I loved. I asked Nature for him; she draws a South-west veil across my eyes, weeping. Francatelli nods a cold and tasteless response! 'Tuck!' No answer! I explore the woods of Copsham dale, fruitlessly.

On Friday is the illustrious small man's birthday, and he must not be left. Edward Peacock and his boy are staying with me till Saturday. Rossetti and Swinburne come on Saturday. Will you come the week following?

Aha!—As if I cannot see that I am cut, and that the gulf of a tail-coat is for ever more twixt me and Tuck.—Believe me still and ever, my dear F. P. Plural, your loving GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

RYDE PIER HOTEL, *August* 16, 1862.

FREE LOVER TUCK!—To-morrow we shall sail! We are off to the West, Love!

And now for a Toast!
(To Tuck the Toast shall be)
I am off along the Coast,
And would he were with me.

(Popular London Air, commonly chanted by Tuck and Robin.)

Here's Morison, drunk with salt water, Mrs. M. ditto. G. M. ditto, ditto. We swear we'll live in it till we come

home pickled. I have got a Pea-jacket and such a nautical hat, and such a roll of the legs already.

Now, Tuck,—Will you do this for me ?—Will you write for this week's 'Ipswich Journal' a summary of the week's news : and an article—on America, if you like. Follow the Press. Will you call and see Foakes ? [1] And if you don't see him, will you, nevertheless, send your work on Thursday, or take it, to Mr. Gough, at 1 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, where you sometimes call and see your Robin on Thursdays ; and if you, perchance, don't see Gough, will you post the aforesaid to H. Knights, Esq., 'Ipswich Journal' Office, Ipswich. I shall write and post one article, but I shan't be up to the latest news.

For I 'll be in a cabin,
Just 3 feet long, 6 square.
Just ponder on your Robin,
The figure of him there.

I don't care a damn,
etc.

You will immensely oblige me by doing this, and I shall then be able to run over to the Channel Islands. If not, I must up to London from Weymouth. Please write then immediately (Post Office, Weymouth, if you write on Monday, ditto Torquay if on Tuesday) that I may hear from you on Tuesday morning. Adieu. My (Neptune emboldens me !) love to Demitroïa.—Your friend, penitent, loving, lastingly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

By the way, why don't you come down to Copsham for a day or two, next week ? If you can write for me, I shan't be back till Tuesday or Wednesday week. The cottage and all in it are yours. There can you invite

[1] Proprietor of the *Ipswich Journal*.



George Meredith & his son Arthur.
from a photograph.

R. C. to dine with you in place of my doing so. And I wish you would! There's wine in the cellar. If you think well of this, drop Miss Grange a word of warning. I am surprisingly aux cieux already.

A dreadful hitch in S. Belloni has been distressing me of late. This day tides me over the difficulty—to-morrow. I am moodily leaning over the bin (2 n's, I think) -acle, thinking of Tuck! Au revoir. Mind! The Weymouth Post Office; Torquay on Wednesday.

To William Hardman.

August 1862.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Here is a precious liberty I am going to take! S—— has come, so I must stop in town, and so must Sons. Will you bed us (Sons and self) till Monday? I fancy S—— will be delighted to come on Sunday. He looks wild and rough, but who wouldn't after being horded with 397 men and 3 women. One of the latter wears a fine moustache. It struck me (I saw the whole boilin' of 'em) that one of the 397 left it on her lips by accident, or that the 397 contributed. Might I bring S——, but No. Oh, Tuck! Shall I tell it?—It's a fact: but in anguish I beg you to conceal it even from D—ia. S—— came smack at my cheeks when we met. It was done before them all. Now I feel what Lucretia's emotions were: or those of the little girl, with the sense of colour so strong, examined by Knox. Your loving

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

GEORGE INN,
GREAT MARLOW, *Sept.* 7, 1862.

Dearest, and if possible, more Precious Tuck, because absent! And yet not so, but more desired. And thereby hangs a philosophy. Johnson hath me in an iron grip:

saith I shan't go save as an arrow head from the bow which himself twangeth. I say, that but for Black Foakes' Day, common to no Calendar, save mine, Alas! I would,

Willy nilly,
Be off with you a jolly dance,
To Falmouth, Torquay and Penzance
Or Scilly.

But Johnson[1] adds—'Will Hardman come down to me at Hoddesdon, on Monday week, and go to see Hatfield (famous old garden and house) and Panshanger, where are pictures of price—if so let him say so, as a man, and he is welcome.' To this I add, from him and from me, Come down here for a day or two. We are comfortable. The country is delicious. The walks are heavenly. The river is a dream of green herbage and reflected heaven. The weather promises. May we expect you on Tuesday or Monday night, perchance—on a sudden: a great feat! You are free, and soon going to be melancholy, if without excitement. Do come. Johnson is very desirous to make acquaintance with the grasp of your hand. I, when I am parted from it, pine, as you know!—Write! But should the true Tuckian inspiration seize you, outstrip the post, as you alone can.—In all love, your faithful ROBIN.

To William Hardman.

FOAKES DEN, AFTER FOAKES DAY,
Sept. 19, 1862.

MY DEAR TUCK,—I rejoice to hear that the wandering atom 'I' is the happy and thrice-beloved 'We' once more. Here's my news. Thursday last a letter from

[1] Of Johnson, Matthey and Co., bullion brokers. Nicknamed 'Bullion.'

Copsham to say that Zillah[1] has Smallpox! Luckily the little man was at Hoddesdon. I have written to Jessopp, who will take him immediately. Hard as it is to let him go, he goes on Friday next. Lo, I have been prompt on this occasion, but conceive the horrible bore. The house won't be habitable for 2 months; and friends won't come under 4. I have notions of skidaddling. I go this day down to Tunbridge Wells, and return on Wednesday following. On Friday to Norwich. Then to Oxford with Morison on Tuesday for a short period. Then to Sussex. Then—perhaps to Tuck, for 2 or 3 days, if he has returned to the Refectory. Health at Marlow excellent: at Hoddesdon poor. Result in London—Megrims.

I heard of poor Hinchliffe from Hamilton last night, who spoke croakily. Please convey to Hinchliffe my word of sympathy and hope to see him recovered soon. Also congratulations of the heartiest kind to that humble aspirant for women's honours, the fair young Betsy! Amphitrite, we might have been sure, would do the business for her. Now for Cupidon. . . .

Went to Hatfield and Panshanger. Hertfordshire is a pretty county. I would rather not dwell in it. Yet with Tuck—and when I say with my We Tuck I do not mean to diminish him and make him small: the contrary; yea, I double him almost—with my We Tuck I could dwell in many places and exchange friendly nods with Providence. . . .

My love to Potter and Nellie.[2] To Demitroïa all sweet things.

PS.—At Hoddesdon, facing Johnson's house, there is a butcher, his name is TUCK.

[1] Niece of Miss Grange, housekeeper at Copsham.
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[2] Ethel and Nellie, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Hardman.

To Mrs. Jessopp.

COPSHAM, ESHER.

MY DEAR MRS. JESSOPP,—I thought I might have come on Friday; but on that day I have three masters; and this is not a figure of speech, but a fact in flesh. I could not get out of harness till 3 P.M., and the 4 express would have brought me to you too late. I should have liked so much to see the boys and my boy among them. He has grown strange to me in the long absence. . . . Now this is my proposition:—You will see it is delivered under the perfect conviction that I am welcome, and even wanted:—as thus: I will come to you this quarter for a week and bring home my little man at its close:—Or:—I will come to you the next quarter for 2-3 weeks, lighter of heart, less burdened on head. I will then write nothing but poetry (not of hedges and ditches) and I will bloom my best.

There!—You shall decide. If I come now I shall certainly not be sad about it: I am certain to be pleased: I can make all arrangements with a week's warning, but I am under some pressure: for this reason, among others, that my fastidiousness has made me turn from my new work to cut to pieces four printed chapters of Emilia (who begins to dissatisfy me totally, as do all my offspring that have put on type). If I come next quarter this gloom and uncertainty will have vanished.

You will flatter me by deciding. I state the case—act thou. You know I shall be happy under the roof that holds my dearest; and more, among my dearest friends: so let your mandate be what it may, hesitate not.—Have I fixed the onus upon you cleverly? I have simply put matters as they stand.

What an unpleasant thing for Holden is that scarlet-fever case! The disease has been going the round of all

the public schools. May Norwich be spared! Yes: I trust: but parental humanity is anxious.

I shall write to Mr. Jessopp in a few days. Pray, let me hear speedily.—Your ever faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frank Burnand.[1]

TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

MY DEAR FRANK,—Your letter has been forwarded to me here. My housekeeper's niece at the Cottage has fever: fortunately Sons were absent. So we are all in exile: and consequently, I pronounce the dread word, and he is already breeched for school.

I shall be in town on Friday, and will order 'that' a copy of 'Modern Love' 'be' sent you. The printers' errors are innumerable.

I am going to Norwich with Sons at the end of the week, to the King Edward's Grammar School, the Head Master of which is a friend, and very fond of the little man. Write to me, 'Care of Rev. A. Jessopp, The School House, Norwich,' whether you can take me for a night, on my return. If the young Mauritius[2] is at Hurstpierpoint, and will have me for 2 or 3 days, I shall then go to him. If you go too, all the better.

That you have been wearing the mask of 'Fun' for some period, I have known.

As often in a bun
  The currants you surprise,
Behind the mask of Fun
  I catch my Franco's eyes.

[1] Later Sir Francis Burnand, on the staff of *Fun*. He became a contributor to, and later editor of, *Punch*.

[2] Maurice Fitzgerald.

To William Hardman.

Oct. 4, 1862.

Tuck, Sweet Charmer, tell me why
I 'm at ease when you are by ?
Have you had ' a round ' with Care,
Left him smoshen, stript him bare,
That he never more can try
Falls with me when you are by ?

Ah, but when from me you 're screened,
Atrobiliad glows the fiend :
Fire is wet and water dry :
Candles burn cocked hats awry :
Hope her diamond portal shuts,
Grim dyspepsia haunts my—Ahem !

(Madrigal written in St. John's College, Cambridge, Saturday, October 4, 1862.)

Yes ! I am here. Meeting of British Ass.—So, why not ? And I 've wandered up and down Trinity thinking of Tuck, the radiant, and of others, mooning by the Cam, into which classic flood dropped numerous dead leaves. I have dined with Fellows and am to dine with them again : have been cordially received, and inhabit chambers of an absent graduate, whose slave is my slave. Jessopp brought me. We return to Norwich to-night. What a good fellow he is ! His wife takes high rank in Demitroïa's Corps. She is quite charming : she unites worth and sweetness of nature and capacity. They have the same face for the school that they show to the world. I never conceived a place better managed. Jessopp has 25 boys in his house. They have studies where 2 study together and are never intruded upon. He breakfasts and dines with them. We have a good deal of Prayer. Oh, Tuck, have we not led thoughtless lives and snuffed our own conceit ! Tuck !

In the evening, Jessopp, his wife, a pretty niece, and myself, do music, read Molière, and are really happy. I feel so much that I would gladly live near them if it were possible.

I particularly wish you to know them. Tuck! It would do thee good, for an I be not deceived, thou art but a lost sheep and one of the ungodly.

The Dormitories of the boys are thoroughly ventilated, cool as a twilight balcony. Each boy is partitioned off from his neighbour, and the main punishment is for infringing this partition. Jessopp has sent up from here six scholarships lately. Well, Sons are wonderfully buoyant in a jiffy. Mrs. Jessopp writes to say that she took the boys to Lowestoft yesterday. Sons were so independent that they assured her they were exactly like the other boys and didn't want looking after. This is a fair prospect for my dear man.

Mrs. Jessopp is the friend of every resident in the house, and the boys love her. In wit and blood she is one of the brightest little women that you can meet. Jessopp may well praise her fine qualities. The Lord decreed to him a helpmate. I say, Tuck! Does praying get us wives of this sort? If so—But it is clear that it does not, for Tuck never goes on his marrow-bones as I have been doing 24 times per diem of late. Jessopp won't let me depart till Monday week. I am very comfortable, so why not?—Then I go to Sussex: then to Richmond, then to Morison, then to Oxford, then to Glaisher and Coxwell, then to Endymion's dear Love. (I will drop you some green cheese regularly at 6 P.M. while there.) After that, Bedlam, I suppose, for I don't know of any other place for which I shall have been such an accomplished graduate. What's coming to me? I feel the sensations of some peculiarly scampish Racket ball. Love to—now, don't get in a passion, Tuck!

Human nature will out, sometimes—Potter, and Nellie, and Potter's mother, and Nellie's mother, and Tuck's wife. So, there, you see: your jealousy brings it on you three times instead of once. Adieu!—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

SCHOOL HOUSE,
NORWICH, *Oct.* 4, 1862.

DEAR SIR,—I take the liberty to write to you, requesting a line of information, concerning one, Tuck, a ruddy man and a lusty, with whom I suppose you to be acquainted, and about whom I have recently been feeling a considerable anxiety. He has relations at Hoddesdon, Tunbridge Wells, and Norwich; but they have no recent knowledge of his proceedings. I have written to him, and can get no reply. You will acknowledge that I have cause for anxiety when I tell you that in a work I have lately been reading, it is said, with regard to fleshpots, that he who giveth his heart to them is on the highroad to perdition. Which was truly and sadly the case with this named Tuck. A dangerous man, Sir! for he tempteth us to love this life, and esteems it a cherishable thing: yet, withal, one whom to know once is to desire ever. For indeed such a one is seldom seen. Pity that such roseate healthful bloom as that he wore upon the cheeks of him should be a banner of Repletion! Alas! and that the sunny perfection delighting us in him signified verily, that Nature, though proud of this, struggled greatly. Even so, the notable rotundity, the fine protuberance, was excess of Potatoe! Yea, and also the very perfectness of him partook too largely of Francatelli. Hence my fear for the man: in that he, who was good himself as an egg fresh-laid, had a love of things good, and did attract them to him profusely: which is against one of

the decrees. Dear Sir! Should you see him, and the faithful and loving spouse, be as good as to make known to him these my enquiries; and that, should he be ill, I recommend any cure but the Epicure: moreover (which he will understand) that I trust among the chief things in his life, that 'WE' may never be split in 2. Finally, that I am in Norwich till Tuesday next, after that Chapman & Hall, Piccadilly 's my address. . . . If gout permit him to use a pen. Gout alone can have kept him silent to his loving friend and admirer. I would wish him to know that Sons are well and happy, had a great fall at Gymnastics last evening, being adventurous, but are none the worse.—Yours respectfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE, NORWICH.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—. . . I can't leave here till Tuesday. They provide all kinds of amusement for me. By the way, Arthur had a tremendous fall, the night before last, at gymnastics in the crypt of the School House. While we were all engaged at a particular swing, this small man mounts up a ladder to catch hold of a pole—misses it, and comes down about sixteen feet, not on his head, or arms, thank the Lord! I felt a slight tug at my hand, and the little fellow related his disaster, shaken and sick, but pluck as stout as ever. No harm done, and some experience gained. I will give you an account of the school when we meet. Yesterday I visited a model Englishman: primarily a gentleman and scholar: a Reverend, also, with full tolerance and zeal for his duties: a farmer, a gardener, and exhibitor of fruits and flowers, and winner of prizes: an innovator in all things, as a man who in all things thinks for himself. He is besides a profound geologist and correspondent of Lyell:

a paleontologist, the friend of Owen: one of the Alpine climbers:—in short, the most capable human creature that I have ever met. Be sure I studied him. He did me the favour to invite me to stay with him, which to my regret I can't do now. . . .—Your faithful and loving

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

Oct. 11, 1862.

Embrace me once more, Oh Tuck! Thou liv'st! This is to chronicle the sudden and unexpected descent of the small man from a height of 17 feet to the ground. Poor Sons little intended the feat and therefore performed it satisfactorily. In the Crypt here, there is a Gymnasium, fitted up under a regular professor, who is fifth master. One Reimicke. He did this and that, he went in and out of this and the other, and his pupils did the like. Apparently Sons had their emulation violently excited, for whilst we were all engaged with other wonders, Sons must mount a ladder by himself, and from the top of it make a catch at a pole from whence to slip down naturally, instead of which he came plump on to the floor. I felt him tugging gently at my hand, and could not make out what was the matter with him. He had come to tell me that he felt queer, and what he had 'gone and done.' I took him up and his nerves gave way just a moment (not noisily). Then we rubbed him a bit and discovered him to be sound. He was jolly and ready for fresh adventures in ¼ of an hour; wiser Sons, as we trust. My parental heart beat fast under its mask. Jessopp and his wife (who is one of the wives of the generation) do all that is possible to make me happy in my own way. They do not want me to go. They do not poetise me but honour me by treating me as simple flesh, so that one does not feel mounted on a pole and ultimately destined to come down as Sons did.

Yesterday I went to visit a splendid fellow, one of the most capable men of his time. Whereof when we meet. I stay with Morison in town. Shall I dine with you on Wednesday? He is alone, if you could ask him too. I wrote to Mr. Hardman for tidings of you; but anticipate no reply—stuck-up Cambridge Swell! Tuck for me! My love to everybody. GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

Nov. 6, 1862.

TUCK, CARISSIMO!—The news being this: Jeff hasn't got R. Houdin. If it is to be had at Nutt's or Dulau's, it will be immediately forwarded to you. Lucas we visited apropos of that fellow Hardman's article. It is to be inserted soon. I told Lucas Hardman was not a fellow to be trifled with: said 'he was a Gastronome!' 'Oh Lord!' says Lucas, 'we mustn't offend him.' I remarked that Hardman had invented New Dishes. 'God bless my soul,' says Lucas, 'I should like to know him.' 'But,' said I, 'the Culinary comments of Tuck, delivered under globular light, are not these meat, wine, and wisdom, and eclipse Hardman as a Christmas flank of beef lords it over the leaner seasons of the year?' 'By Jingo,' says Lucas, 'it is a privilege to know him!' Steadily facing my Editor, I said: 'And Tuck is my pupil.' He rung my hand speechless. 'All I exact,' said I, 'is that you publish "Tar and Feathers" instanter, or you experience the operation.' He made sign that it should be done within a month.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, ESHER, *Nov.* 12, 1862.

TUCK, GREAT HEART!—I will come to you to-morrow, and dine and hear music, and sleep, if you can take me. Dinner with 'O. a W.' postponed. Still we carpenter. It

is great exercise. I have half cut my great toe off already. Axe went slap through my big plodding boots and set me dancing over the meadow as if Demitroïa had struck up the Tarantella.

To William Hardman.

Dec. 10, 1862.

To-day, you know, I dine with Morison.
Is there a dinner with Tuck on the horizon ?

Tuck, my treasure ! Tuck, my pleasure !
Lucas won't have a meeting at the 'Cheshire
Cheese' till after Christmas—truly,
He 's a bore and I 'm yours duly,

ROBIN.

PS.—And if you love me, write and say so.
'Quæque cupit, sperat,' sings Ovidius Naso.

To William Hardman.

Dec. 13, 1862.

DEAR TUCK,—In reply to your Mandate this day received : Sons come up on Wednesday and sleep in town that night : but how can I possibly keep him from Copsham on Thursday ? I fear me I must take him down. It was his special request six weeks ago.

And tho' my Friar's mandate is severe,
The wishes of the sons of sons are dear.
I really fear
I must bring home my little man on Thursday :
(As you would rhyme) that he may in the furze play.

Acknowledge that a Friar cannot always be obliged. I shall regret not to see the King and Queen of B.

. . . .

Thine, ROB.

To William Hardman.

Dec. 13, 1862.

From Gentz's Diary. Tage-Bücher von Friedrich von Gentz. Ed. Varnhagen v. Ense, 'J'ai lu le soir les feuilles infernales de Cobbett.'

1 du mois d'avril (he reads it on Friday, 21st July 1809—shortly upon Wagram, I think, or Lobau on the Danube: 'La crainte, que je nourrissais depuis quelque temps de quelque grave catastrophe, menaçant l'intérieur de l'Angleterre, a été prodigieusement augmentée par cette lecture, dont l'effet sur moi—je ne puis le dissimuler—a été presque aussi grand que celui des plus épouvantables nouvelles qui rétentissaient dans mon voisinage direct.')

Gentz was, by birth, a Prussian, in the Austrian diplomatic service, of high ability, much trusted, conversant with English politics and English politicians, the friend of Metternich and others. He writes this certainly under excitement, but it is useful as showing the dread Cobbett could inspire abroad, the view taken on the continent of his writings and their presumed results.

Gentz evidently confounds him as utter Radical. Perhaps you might look out in Cobbett's Register, of this date, and see what 's to be gathered. At any rate, what I have written out, might make a good foot-note illustration.[1]

To Tuck from Robin

Sons come on Wednesday!—Demitroïa will translate the
French
For you, I am sure, if you ask her humbly.
In concord and with reverence, Adieu, my lusty Friar.
Adieu, adieu, my Friar, he cried;
O, much I trust that they have lied, who tell these things
of you.

[1] William Hardman was then at work upon a life of Cobbett, which was, however, put aside when he learned that John Morley was at work upon the same subject.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

Dec. 15, 1862.

My darling little Man!—I shall be at Shoreditch station, on Wednesday, to meet the Train at 6.30. But, you must not be disappointed, if I tell you that it will be too late for you to go on to Esher that night; and you will sleep at Mrs. Morison's, in Porchester Square. Mr. Hardman wants me to dine with him on Thursday, but I have told him I am afraid you won't let me. Copsham will be delighted to see you. All the dear old woods are in their best winter dress. Mossy Gordon has come from Eton. Janet leaves England next week; but hopes to see her dear boy before she goes.—Be careful not to have any larks in the train. Only fools do that. As much fun as you like, but no folly. Look out for Ely Cathedral, just before you get to Ely station. At Cambridge you will see the four towers of 'King's' Chapel, built by Cardinal Wolsey. Tell Angove, that I will get a bed for him, if he wishes to sleep in Town on Wednesday night. And give Angove your address, written down; that he may let me know when he will come to London from Cornwall, and we will go to the theatre together, and then he will take you to school again.—Your loving Papa,

George Meredith.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

Esher, *Dec.* 23, 1862.

My dear Jessopp,—I found my little man looking marvellously brisk and clear of eye. All his friends exclaim that his school agrees with him. I am altogether pleased and satisfied, and (quoique pauvre diable, comme vous savez) should ungrudgingly pay double the annual sum, to have him with you and your wife, which I consider a privilege not to be measured by money.

I presume that if I send to Bankers at Norwich, according to directions, before the next session, it will do.

I am amused from morning to night by Arthur's account of the 'boys.' It is as I suspected: he knows their characters consummately. I had the same faculty when I was young. But, whether he gets it from deduction, or nervous feelers, or the conjunction of both, I can't guess. He hopes to get a prize next year: speaks of his success in 'dictation'; not boastingly; but to assure him whom he suspects to be a sceptical Papa, that he is not lazy and not stupid. He is not, absolutely, either of the two. He is pre-eminently a growing boy, and has some characteristics to outgrow. He will never, I fancy, do credit to you by any display of acquired knowledge; but, after a period, I think you will find that his understanding is as sound as that of any fellow you have had to do with.

He says: 'Jerrard, minor, is the gentlemanly boy of the School.'

'Not Angove,' I asked.

'Yes, Angove, too; but he's not so courteous as Jerrard minor. Jerrard minor always thinks of others first. I like him.'

The one point he evidently a little chafes at (though not complainingly, and with submission, poor martyr!) is the Sunday religious exercise, which you have dared to temper for the poor lambs, and which they must still think severe. I remember, at that age, how all love of the Apostles was belaboured out of me by three Sunday services of prodigious length and drowsiness. 'Corinthians' will forever be associated in my mind with rows of wax candles and a holy drone overhead, combined with the sensation that those who did not choose the road to Heaven, enjoyed by far the pleasantest way. I cannot hear of Genesis, or of the sins of amorous David,

or of Hezekiah, without fidgetting in my chair, as if it had turned to the utterly unsympathetic Church-wood of yore. In despair, I used to begin a fresh chapter of the adventures of St. George (a serial story, continued from Sunday to Sunday), and carry it on till the preacher's voice fell. Sometimes he deceived me (I hope, not voluntarily) and his voice bade St. George go back into his box, and then ascended in renewed vigour once more; leaving me vacant of my comforting hero; who was not to be revived, after such treatment. I have known subsequent hours of ennui: but nothing to be compared with those early ones. Your evening service is a noble relief, your evening discourse most sensible, healthy and calculated to catch the wandering, youthful mind. But, it is the third dose of the day. Is it, therefore, appreciated? I know you can't change the system, even tho' you should view the case as I view it. I am merely prattling. I think the drill an admirable idea for an assemblage of anchorites. The future monk will be most grateful for it. I fear the future man will revenge himself.

I think my friend's yacht starts on the 7th January. It will be away about six days. I shall be back at Esher in time. But at that period keep me informed of your place of abode. I would not miss you for any number of yacht excursions. On this occasion (snow promising, or stiff gales) I go to please my friend, more than myself.

All that a thankful Papa can say, to the Lady of three Pussies black!—Alack!—was not the omen a death?

The best thing I can wish you at this season is, Strength to conquer the Christmas pudding! I would that I dined at home! I would eat by the dictates of common sense and a discreet appetite. As it is I plunge with knowledge aforethought into a week's dyspepsia. I shall be ridden all night by a plum-pudding-headed hag: shall taste the horrors without the vacuity of Death! We will hope

better things for our grandchildren. Or, are we simply degenerate stomachs? and ought we to eat the fearful dainty (the British Cook's one Great Conception) with gratulation?—Adieu!—Your faithful

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

Esher, *Dec.* 23, 1862.

My Christmas Tuck!—I am preparing for the pudding with tremendous exercise. I had made up my mind to go with you to Boxing Night festivity, with Sons likewise. But, he will not like the Strand. He is ardent for a jolly Clown, a Pantaloon of the most aged, the most hopeless, a twirling Columbine, a Harlequin with a wand on everybody's bottom. This does the small man seriously incline to. Can I say Nay? And he finds he detests Plays and Burlesques. I remember his last visit to the Strand. He is too young for puns, so, if you have taken tickets, sad shall I be: but I am for Drury Lane, or Covent Garden: for uproar; a pit reeking with oranges; gods that flourish pewter-pots and tricks that stick and show their mortality at starting. Would, would, would that Tuck were then at my side! I declare that I have swung my beetle[1] and roared at anticipated headlong fun with Tuck. I would go to both; but, you see, I have again promised the Son. I must go the following night, and there is the further loss of time, if I disappoint him. I understood you distinctly a Pantomime, bully Tuck! Do we quarrel? If so, I send Love to Somebody and snap my fingers at you. If not, my regards of the warmest to both.—Your affectionate

George Meredith.

[1] The beetle—an iron weight at the end of a wooden shaft; this was thrown into the air and caught again by the shaft. There is little doubt that it was this exercise which largely contributed to his spinal weakness in later years.

To William Hardman.

ESHER, ISLAND OF COPSHAM,
Jan. 6, 1863.

TUCK, ahoy! Messmate! This is the weather for yachting. Yo—ho—hoi!

The 'Irene' tugs and runs amuck
At all she meets on Ocean bobbin':
Hard to the taffrail clutches Tuck:
There 's little of the Cock in 'Robin'!

Below, discussing pipes and beer,
And all that may and all that mayn't be,
St. Bernard says that he feels queer,
And queerer still feels Mrs. St. B.

James Parthenon of tempest tells
5 jolly yachtsmen once were lost in;
Pales the red cheek of Tuck, as swells
With ocean's roll the gorge of Austin.

'Now, do you think, you Argue-nots,'
St. Bernard asks, 'seasick was Jason?'
The Jolly yachtsmen eye their cots,
Austin cries 'Ho!'—and Tuck 'A basin!'

St. Bernard hurries on the deck:
Not long his chattering teeth have kept tune
To waves that threat the 'Irene's' wreck,
When one bears off his pipe to Neptune!

Then Tuck, half doubting he 's afloat,
Rolls up, with eyes all greeny-sheeny:
Clutches St. Bernard at the throat:
'Tell me! Did Cubitt[1] build the "Irene"?'

[1] Cubitt, builder of Gordon Street and a wide area in the Bloomsbury district, in which Hardman's home was situated. Cubitt was one of the best builders in London, or, indeed, in England, and his houses are noted for their excellent construction.

Five jolly yachtsmen ! Yachtsmen five !
And have you seen five jolly yachtsmen ?
If they 're not dead, why they 're alive :
They 're sprawling mid the pipes and potsmen !

The ghostly yacht which now you 'll see
Go sailing up the British Channel,
A Poet and a Friar there 'll be
On board : the latter frock'd in flannel.

Like Lucifers with lobsters dash'd,
The hue upon their cheeks and noses.
The Friar cries loud : ' Our fate we 've hash'd.
Why sail'd we not i' the time of roses ? '

' There was a place called Gordon Street ;
A planet known as Francatelli,'

. . . . . .

(Here the Friar ventures on familiar and non-admissible rhymes. He is dismissed to seek companionship with the Flying Dutchman.)

Tuck of the Earth ! I cannot come to you to-morrow, as I have to go to Chelsea. I think St. Bernard will ask me to him for Thursday. I doubt if we meet this week. If you have aught pressing to communicate, address—16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W. Adieu.—Your loving

George M.

A letter from Tasmania has reached me ' Saved from wreck of Colombo.'

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

Esher, Surrey, *Jan.* 7, 1863.

My dear Jessopp,—Will you come on Friday evening, at 6 p.m., next week ? I hope you will stay the day

following at least. I am too modest to press the cottage strongly upon you, and bid you do as it seemeth best to you.

In the matter of Anchorites. Do you really believe them to have been men of thews and breadth of brow? Yes, if they have slaughtered their dozens and begin to think Heaven a pleasant resting-place. As a rule, No. Endurance is not a test of the fact. The physically robust man would have wasted and succumbed. The bilious and nervous man will last longer than the sanguine. Physiology will tell you much. Then again, can I morally admire, or reverence, or see positive virtue in, St. Simeon? Was he a hero, of his kind? Does the contemplation of him bring us nearer to God? To what a God! I turn aching in all my flesh to adore the Pagan, in preference. He smites kind nature in the face, to please his God!—St Sim. may be a very strong man. Granting it, I shall think more of Milo. He tears up the groaning oak, which I hold better than to pluck with fanatic fingers at the roots of humanity.—Don't you see that it is not adoration moves the stinking Saint, but, basest of prostrations, Terror. Terror, mighty to knit a man for endurance when allied to a cringing greed for a fair celestial seat.—The truth is, you sniff the sublime in this creature. Your secret passion is for sublimity. Beauty you love; but, by the way, under protest; and with the sense of being a sinner. Clerical training is to blame. But, change the system. Beauty is to be sought—let sublimity come. Both are rare: but the former is our portion—belongs to us. To deface it, is not sublime—villainous, rather! To outrage reason as well as beauty, shows the organisation of a ruffian. Be not misled by this dirty piece of picturesque Religiosity, animated: my gorge rises! I hold my nostrils. I cry for a South-west wind to arise. Plunge them into the pit, O Lord!

these worshippers of the pillar.—'Cujus ad effigiem, tantum non meiere, fas est.'—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

GARRICK CLUB.

MY DEAR FRED,—'Rhoda' now rushes to an end. I don't at all know what to think of the work. I am confused by this frost. It nips and impoverishes me.

By the way:—What of the dog? If you haven't heard of him, it is by no means improbable that he has left the neighbourhood, the County, the south-west, in fact, and trotted back to Yorkshire. The Colley is famous for his 'sagacity' as the Natural History books say, in this respect; and will find his way back to a point in Scotland out of England.

Please write. You haven't my excuse. I see you in that dear little room, warm, with one eye on a winter prospect, snow and black river between the banks.—Tell me, how the frost takes you; kindly or not.—Gilmore, à propos of acting and art, is powerful. He is a thorough 'Gallery' critic—hates, adores, flings his orange-peel and empties his brandy-flask, and is quite satisfied with himself at the conclusion.

Miss Bateman is said to have failed as 'Julia.' I can see that to be possible, though I bow to her Leah. Let me have a letter speedily.—Yours lovingly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

Jan. 28, 1863.

DEAR 'AT ANY PRICE' TUCK!—I come. Dinner you give me at half-past five, I presume? A note to Foakesden, if earlier. Let us have 5 ms. for a pipe, before we go. You know we are always better tempered when

this is the case. I come in full dress. And do the honour to the Duke's motto. I saw my little man off on Monday, after expedition over Bank and Tower. Thence to Pym's, Poultry: oysters consumed by dozings. Thence to Purcell's: great devastation of pastry. Thence to Shoreditch, where Sons calmly said: 'Never mind, Papa; it is no use minding it. I shall soon be back to you,' and so administered comfort to his forlorn Dad.—My salute to the Conquered One, and I am, your loving, hard-druv, much be-bullied ROBIN.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *Feb.* 1, 1863.

DEAR TUCK!—Come, if you can tear yourself away, on Wednesday. Dinner at 6½. Orridge and wife, Wyndowe. Robin, most anxious. . . . We are likely to have a good fine blowing afternoon for the heath and the woods: I say no more. Only

Write me no pretty note
Puling excuses.
Scorned by the Muses,
Who 's tied to a petticoat!

A new receipt:—I try it on Orridge to-night. 'Lark Pood'n.' 'A bottom of stout juicy steak, topped by 2 doz. ½ bearded oysters, topped by 1 doz. larks.' General sentiment by anticipation—'Gallopschtious!' I have an idea that 2 kidneys might be introduced. I have hitherto refrained from touching a lark: not wishing that divine bird to send reproaches to me from heaven and fill the foundation of my digestion with remorse. Do I degenerate? Is it recklessness? Or the noble prosecution of science, the wish to know all?—Adieu! It is friendship that says 'Come!' What reply?

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No, he wouldn't leave his wife
And he shouldn't leave his wife.
He didn't go to Copsham
'Cause he couldn't leave his wife.

ROBIN LAURELPATE.

To Captain Maxse.

ESHER.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—The principle of health is this, to make good blood plentifully, and to distribute it properly. Exercise of the right sort, acting on seasonable diet, keeps the machine clear. Sweating saves us from impurities, at all events. The form of exercise must depend upon observation of our peculiar economy. As a rule, walking much is only good for people in health, any other exercise you can stop the moment you 've had enough: but you can't exactly time your distances: and the instantaneous effect of fatigue, where there 's one weak function, is to fall upon it bodily. A weak stomach is thus awfully oppressed by long walks. . . .

My best solitary exercise is throwing the beetle—a huge mallet weighing 18 or 19 pounds—and catching the handle, performing wondrous tricks therewith. The best in the world is fencing, which braces the nerves, tightens muscles, occupies brain, better than anything going: contains fit measure of excitement and is thorough exercise. Boxing is a little brutal, though good. Fencing brightens the eye without blackening it. Avoid beer, which is gaseous exceedingly. You see, very old ale is too strong for the head, if drunk as ale: and the young unseasoned beer we drink has to be digested with difficulty. Avoid new wines. A bottle of oldish claret might serve you four days. See that it 's good and sound. That makes blood without heating. Your evenings—but what are an Englishman's evenings? Hotbeds of

dyspepsia, as a rule. There should be liveliness, music, billiards, dancing, dialogue, laughter—choice of all these. Instead of which—I ask you!

Don't drive your mind a step.

I hope I shall come to you soon, and then we 'll see better what your condition is. We must hear the nightingales together. Last night I had them all round me on the heath. The woods were one orchestral semicircle. What priceless weather, O my friend! And how of your Ladye? Ah, happy you! At this season what a beggar am I, that hold out my hand and touch space at my fingers' ends! Back comes the blood to my heart, which says, 'Well! let 's strike on like a hammer, then!' Ding-dong, is my tune.

I saw Borthwick the other day, and see that your brother has got Heligoland, where his wife will help to make him popular. Altogether a good appointment, my Lord! Here the Princesse Françoise marries the Duc de Chartres. First cousins! But necessity of state overbears the duties of flesh. They must marry something Royal, and what if their children howl, or hang limp, so long as the blood is kept pure?—The philosopher laughs sadly at these things. He inclines to say 'Down with Institutions!' They do much for us—do they not undo more? The truth is that everything that is would be right (according to the optimist, who sees half the truth) would be right, I say, if we were just wise enough to pluck the flower and not tie ourselves to the roots. So the age of an Institution (quiconque) becomes the slavery of its supporters. To know when a thing hath perished, or is vital, is one of the tests of wisdom. Figure to yourself a lover who hears a voice in his ghastly bosom, demanding answer to the question, 'Was it all delusion?' And thus he bases his logic—'Impossible; it could not be delusion, for the dream was so immense, the rapture

so heavenly.' We all cling to the days that were and won't be sons of Time. To be the sticks and stones of a glorified past day we think better.—Better be men, I say!

Alas! those visits of the meek and guileless clergy! Thou errant one, that art invited to archery Meetings!—'tis to the pew thou art being lured, or dragged perforce.—Love to boy. My kindest regards to your beloved, and know me ever, your loving GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

PICCADILLY, *March* 20, 1863.

TUCK, GREAT ARCHER!—Thrice thy shaft has hit me!—On Thursday night we meet at Robert Cook's. On Wednesday I shall dine with thee? I am overwhelmed with disgust at 'Emilia.' Am hurrying her on like Ye Deuce. She will do. But, ahem!—she must pay. I have taken some trouble with her and really shall begin to think her character weak in this respect, if she don't hand in what I think due, speedily. I'm afraid, considering hopes of cash, house to build, linen to buy, that 'Once a Week' will hold me from St. B. and the Blue Medi T. . . . Longing to see you, and with L. to a person who will pardon the impudence, and is not of the great host who care only to see 2 strokes put through the middle of that eloquent letter.—Your devoted

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *April* 8, 1863.

Your medicines and directions came opportunely,[1] deciding me not to send for Izod. Sons are as a mulberry in the shade, they are spotted like a Pard, they are

[1] Arthur had caught measles. Hardman was an enthusiastic homœopath, in which belief Meredith shared.

hot as boiled cod in a napkin ; they care for nothing but barley water, which I find myself administering at all hours of the night, and think it tolerable bliss, and just worth living for, to suck an orange. I am sorry to say they have a rather troublesome cough, otherwise all goes well.—Your loving GEORGE M.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

ESHER, *Sept.* 1863.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—There is a 10.57 train from London to your City—which snatches small boys from the hearts of their parents. On Tuesday next, my little recovered rosy man will journey down, alone, by that train, chewing the cud of anticipating fancy (I hope). The Guard will be bribed to keep eye on him. Will you send some person to meet him ? He will be somewhat at sea, with his swoln bag, in the press of an arrival.

Thank Mrs. Jessopp, from me, for her last letter.

She will know, that, whatever inconsiderate relatives might do, my care for the sanitary condition of K. Ed. 6th's Grammar School is too great to permit me to allow a convalescent to return without performance of proper quarantine. I expect great praise from her. And indeed, my heart is heavy at parting. I let him go from me now under a high sense of duty. What strange dispensation is it which gives you my boy for the best portion of his young years ?

I am in alarm about his boating on your river before he can swim.

Is there always some responsible, careful fellow in the boats with the youngsters ? Pray, tell me.

And also, write to me, I beg, to let me know that he comes safe to you. Address, Chapman & Hall, for Wednesday morning.

As to your book, those publishers will not do. I should certainly put my finger on Macmillan. If not, then Longman, who is a gentleman, as well as man of business.

I had the pleasure of exchanging salutes with Mr. Jessopp of Cheshunt on Friday morning, as I was returning from Hoddesdon.

If you will take me in for a few days at the end of May or beginning of June, I will gladly come, and see some cricket, among other things.—Your very faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

ESHER, *May* 1863.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I believe fully that the globules are efficacious. I have seen them produce the effects specifically intended.

Vegetable diet is generator of gases in a weak stomach. Moreover the pasturing on grass does not make a soul milder. My experience is this: that no healthy person ever takes to vegetable diet, excluding meat: but that some people may make themselves more clean and sound if they do so, for the reason that weak blood is apt to be irritated by the juices of flesh, which are too strong for it. All that I have ever known take to vegetable diet were scrofulous, in the second or third degree: not robust and pure. The best thing, now and then, is a chop and bread for dinner. If the stomach is quite down, eschew potatoes as well as beer. In exercise see mainly that you open the chest. Don't sit long at a time. Read out for a space. Rise quickly in the morning. Exercise after bath; and pray do not be more than half an hour without feeding, if you only take a crust of bread and water. Your Moulsey habit of long morning fasts, I remember. To bed early: but if you feel heavy take dumb-bell exercise. This must bring

you round. Continue pepsine, with now and then a halt. Take no 'iron.' A wineglass of quinine half an hour before dinner for three or four days running might do good. . . .—Your faithful GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

June 30, 1863.

The Record
Of Robin's sad Effort to
Fool
For the Beguilement of his Sov. Lord
Tuck

'A lady, the other day, having cut half her acquaintance, cut her own finger!' Nay, my Lord, spare the lash! I will get better. Robin, on being told that he was imitating the jesting of Burnand, replied: 'Didn't I tell you I was robbin' Burnand!' Ha! Ha!—What! Still frowns my Lord?

On receiving your commands, I thought first of hunting up the King and Queen [1] for matter new and strange: but calls upon me kept me from them. I dined yesterday with one C——, Lord Carlisle's Secretary, who met Swinburne at Milnes's, and got him to bring about a meeting; after which, to astonishment of Poet, said P. was dropped. We dined at St. James's Club, after passing the afternoon at Lord's Cricket Ground, where we saw Gentlemen against Players. First-rate match, and I had a fine set of characters about me: old country squires; knights and lords; old cricketing hands hot for the honour of the game. Notably a Colonel M—— amused me, and shall see himself if he looks one day in a book

[1] Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Hamilton.

of mine. Then in the evening talks C—— of ME: of the effect of my work on him: and to the effect that in the circles he best knew, your Robin had made impression deep. That: that: and that!—He's a nice fellow; with good sense: handsome. . . .

To William Hardman.

July 4, 1863.

Dropping out of Chapman and Hall's the other day, I fell on the placid face of Poco,[1] who, without a ruffle of his surface received me, that would have sent a hundred million ripples crossing rosily over Tuck. The Señor Poco spoke of a bad man—poor vulgarian, that he is! and without reverence, or holiness. Not yet of the Elect, yet is this foreigner hopeful, and one, let us hope, as we may, of a right promising future. He hath desire in him for companionship among the Pantags: humble desire; and he taketh his occasional most healthful snubbing. He is going to send you the 'Court Journal.' . . . By the way, C—— told me that when Prins was at Curragh he came to the Vice-Regal Lodge, and played cricket. C—— warned all the opposition bowlers that Royal patronage of the manly game depended on Prins getting at least one run. Having missed whilst fielding, two fine smack-into-the-hand catches, Wales goes in, and faces an unnamed, steady, determined Briton of a bowler, round, ruddy — an inevitable creature: one clearly selected by the Gods to do this black business with the utmost satisfaction and comfort. Down went the wicket of your Prins at the first delivery of ball! To make matters worse, some wretches (not knowing that the wicket was a royal one, or not feeling that the knocking of it over was rank treason to the Throne and to cricket)

[1] Lionel Robinson.

applauded lustily. Your Prins marched out with his bat amid the thunders.

At the first ball his wicket fell, and sins
No more has batted your illustrious Prins.

There, Tuck! Now don't say I am not out harvesting for your delight. And I 'll get more stories for you, don't fear!

To William Hardman.

July 1863.

DEAREST CUPID—TUCK!—I thought it all along! I said: 'This—my Friar whom I love—must be the Rosey Boy, well plumped on British fare.' And now that the G. M. (Oh!—dost thou mark the similarity of initials most wondrous! Yea, is it not full of meaning!) acknowledges that she came up the Mersey in a cockle-shell, Tuck cannot deny that he is Cupidon. And 'tis he who has twanged his bow and done Robin this dreadful damage—Alack! No more of this. But seriously, you, leaning over the side of a fat Olympian cloud floating over Copsham. I see you turn to Demitroïa-Psyche. 'Poor Robin,' you say. 'Let 's have him here,' says she. 'He 'll never get to heaven,' says you, 'till a woman brings him.' 'True,' sighs D-P.

(Damn that Tuck—he kisses her, pretends she wants to be consoled!—Has Olympus no shades?)

Write to me care of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, Esq., Seaford, Sussex. I shall be there perchance a week, and yet a day more, unless they gamble awfully. . . .

Why don't you tell me how your sisters are? They 're married, you know. You 're right to protect your mother, but your sisters have husbands. Good-bye. I hope to be able to spin livelier rubbish when I have taken rest, and seen new men, fresh faces, other minds.

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

SEAFORD, HADES, *July* 10, 1863.

DEAR TUCK,—(A letter to the above address will find me.) Oh !—But rage and anguish stifle me ! I tell thee, Tuck,—Why should I tell thee who carest not ? Here am I—as an animal. Our life is monstrous.

. . . .

My breakfast would supply a Workhouse: my luncheons are equal to the refections of four fat Friars : my dinner would satiate the soul of a ticket-of-leave man. I go to bed when Apollo lays his red nose over the Eastern hill, and light-foot hours carry it on their shoulders in triumph to 27 Gordon Street, what time Tuck, with a final snore, says, 'Blow it ! ' and consents to rise. . . . Here is Frank Burnand that reeks puns from every pore : Maurice and Gerald Fitzgerald, Signor Vignati, Hyndman (Cambridge), Lawrence, painter, and others coming. I suppose I shall stop through next week. I don't think it possible for me to start with you. Of course I shall follow you—don't fear ! You have a little wounded, and shot an arrow at your Robin, for why couldn't you wait for him ? Or consult with him about going ? Still, I do give you my word that there is great probability of my running over to join you during your last two weeks. Write and say, before you go, what you fancy will be your arrangements. And, O Tuck, write from among the mountains, that will look on you, and tell me of the hearts to whom your COMPANION shall have imparted swift emotion and a habit of breathing. Of Demitroïa tell me. Of her health and spirits. . . . Tell me of yourself fully. Say where you are to be found in or about Thun ; and instruct me of the means of getting to you. I had passionately desired to see great wonders of creation with my Tuck, so that in days to

come, when Robin is as a rushlight, and Tuck one of Price's Patent Composite Tallow-vats, we two may say—'This we saw, and that we saw, green Alpine lakes where the brides of the angels bathe; snows pure as the forehead of YOUR COMPANION; peaks, passes, and all the other P.'s':—only, my Tuck, the sublime and beautiful should for ever stand as witnesses of a marriage of our true affection, the same being registered in verse immortal by reason of the subject.

In Thun, you will see Jessopp: haply, may you hear him out of tune (notes of Burnand). But, if you hear him—Think of a Cockchafer informing the world that his wife has run away from him:—so deep, so desolate the voice of Jessopp. Take to thy mind Nature's bassest note: conceive a voice millions of fathoms below the crust of earth: the incarnation of three Minor Canons primed for their holy labours on port: a Cathedral voice: a voice that you shake to and curiously look to see whether one works his coat-tails as bellows to inflate and give inspiration to such a voice:—even such the voice of Jessopp. He desires very much to see and know you. Do your best to meet him. I know that Demitroïa has exchanged words with his wife. Enough. Comfort my heart with a letter or two. I am rather knocked over by seeing you depart, and feeling rather bound. I have the consolation (Poor! Poor!) of knowing that you will long heartily for Gordon Street after a week's absence. Well: Good-bye! I wish you all joy. Demitroïa, your COMPANION, Hinchliffe, and the 3 jolly good fellows rolled into the one Tuck, whom I know and love.

To Mrs. Hardman.

SEAFORD, SUSSEX, *July* 12, 1863.

MOST FAIR AND DEAR SCEPTIC,—Now it was told of a man that an angel leaned out of heaven and dropped to

him a ring, of which, he said, Catch hold: and the man sought to catch hold: but ever the ring swayed, and its swaying was the promise of bliss and the baffling of desire. So the man thought, If I jump I catch it. And, lo, he jumped. And at the first jump touched the ring, which flew from him. At the second jump likewise, and in addition his falling was upon his nose. Even so he went at the 3rd and 4th essay, and on. Then thought he: This ring is cast so far from me because that an Angel dropped it so near! Alas! What sadder thing is there to the full heart of great wishes than the word 'Almost.' If the man, dear Critic of weakness, had seen the said ring distant, he had remarked—The birds of the air may catch it; but it hung within mortal grasp—almost! He could just touch it. The effort to seize sent it heavenward—him to earth. Yet, O Heaven! as Ocean collects her billows for one great plunge, I know not but that I will try. I see that you are making a circuit, and that the Wild Man of Gordon Street is for pranks, so to be with you one must start with you. If you see me on Tuesday it will be that I have come to town to make immediate arrangements for joining you for the reason partly, that the Wild Man is not, in my opinion, a fitting protector of—of you, of course he is (after a fashion), of, I was going to say—and it is no use his frowning at Table d'Hôte; for they will openly admire a lovely woman on the Continent: where, let me add, Beauty, if not jealously watched and guarded . . . and the fresh English wild rose without a disengaged hand and forecasting mind to pave its way may be in danger of a moment's sensitive disquiet—at the contemplation of which possibility the hearts within us do painfully pant and heave. But let us talk seriously. Is your COMPANION quite well? May I beg you to present her with my kind regards. Prompted by the fatherly feeling (which must exist

though the position be denied to me) pray assure that young lady that I am pervaded by the very warmest interest in her welfare, and claim, by right of my expressed admiration (that excessive daring might call affection) of another and greater from whom she springs, to declare that my sentiments on her behalf are parental in their depth.

All this means that if I can, can, can—I will: that there is just a chance: that I am going to make the spring, and if the ring don't swing I may cling like anything, and just be caught up to a six weeks' Heaven among you, and nothing short of it under your wing. My state no Weather-cock, with a thunder-storm on the South-east, and the wind North-west, would describe. Pierrot straightening hands and legs to dance facing the four corners alternately would look foolish beside me. A newly-caged wild cat might outwardly represent my condition. I boil to come. I am frozen. There comes a thaw. In a twinkling I am all rosily rippling like a summer sea in the calm confidence that I shall go. Then blight falls. I find myself stripped like a gladiator fighting with a single sword against the three Women of the Net and the Thread. A voice whispers: 'If you cut the net the thread will likewise be severed.' I swoon and the hideous spectres cry, ''Tis done!' Oh, my dear Madame! Are you one of the Three: why do you teach happy men to love you? For I love not that Tuck at all. He has taken to swearing of late. His letters come on me louder than Blatchington Battery hard by, which blew off a volunteer artilleryman to Neptune's bosom some time ago. I say I love not that Tuck. He is profane: a puffed out insolent Friar—who goes about saying that He is the better half of 'WE.' If I come I shall delight in the snubbing of him. My Goodness! Suppose, after all, I do not come! It is of no use looking

into that enormous Black Pit. Daylight is with you, dear Mrs. Aurora! And I hope that in subscribing myself I may really prove as responsive to the ray of light received from you this morning as did the Stoney Harpist of old, and so earn the right to be your ever nothing other than GEORGE MEMNON.

PS.—I send my love to the household.

N.B.—Tell me who has got most in the scramble. And Oh! Please somebody wish that I may get a fillip of encouragement on Tuesday morning here, and shall perhaps shut my eyes and let my heart steer me—which it doesn't always do badly, does it?—Not falsely, I am sure. And if, poor fellow, he goes wrong and meant right, why he 's certain to lead one to experience, which, taken properly, is wealth, wisdom!—and Hurrah!

To William Hardman.

SEAFORD, *July* 14, 1863.

I find I cannot get the reading and Foakes both done; and so collapse like a demnition bladder. Woe 's me, Tuck!

Chapman must have some MSS. immediately read. On the whole, I do see that it 's the right thing for me to work straight on this year. I lose a great pleasure, dear Tuck! Think of me. If you can spare time, or are blessed with a rainy day, write to me. My warmest salute to Demitroïa. The same, properly clipped and cooled, to Your Companion. My love to you. All joy with you. I had ordered a travelling suit and got half ready to come!—Yours lastingly, GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *July* 19, 1863.

. . . Lucas wants me to begin in 'O. a W.' the end of October. I do not think I can. And how can I possibly . . . and my last chapter of Emilia to retouch and the proofs . . . Le Pauvre Lucas! . . . Let me tell you that Poco has this day gained, after 3 astounding efforts, admission to the ranks of the Pantagruelians. . . . Of Sons, let me say, that they are wonderfully browned by Seaford sun and breeze and very jolly. If I come, he will stay at Copsham.

Tuck! I don't think:—

'No more,' the dark Confessor said!
'I know him: one of many thou!
He, when thy heart is won, is fled:
For ages he has done as now.

'There is no hope: thou canst not rest:
Obedient to his wanton whim,
Yea, North and East, and South and West,
For ever must thou follow him.

'Young Cupid was he called of old:
That Will o' Wisp incorporate:
Tuck is he named, a reveller bold,
To follow him is ay thy fate.

'He hath thee in a golden mesh,
And thee will have for evermore.
He is a Genius of the Flesh—'
—Yet still, my Tuck, I thee adore.

To Captain Maxse.

COPSHAM, ESHER.

DEAR MAXSE,—I could not answer your letter in time on Thursday, and much as I wished to come to you, could

not, seeing that I had to meet the Son at Shoreditch station that evening. He is, I thank the Lord! well and brisk. Have you decided anent the title of the house? I could only help you with criticism. No really taking name struck me. I go to Norwich with Arthur in about two weeks, and have multitudinous engagements, but will keep myself pledged to you for a week in May.—Now that Emilia 's off my mind, alas! Poetry presses for speech! I fear I am, unless I make great effort, chained to this unremunerative business for a month or so. I am getting material for the battle-scenes in 'Emilia in Italy.' But, I have an English novel, of the real story-telling order, that must roll off soon and precede it.[1] Minor tales, too, and also an Autobiography. Which to be at first, is the point, and while I hesitate comes a 'Wayside piece,' a sonnet, a song—Ambition says—'Write this grand Poem.' I smile idiotic and should act with all due imbecility but for Baker's bills and Boy.—Know me ever, your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *August* 1, 1863.

MY DEAR BELOVED TUCK!—Poco is off: started on Friday for Havre; for Bordeaux, for Bayonne, the Pyrenees; and so round to Dauphiné. He has gone; but the hold of the terrible fellow is on me still. I am fast bound by my word to meet him at Grenoble, and tread the Dauphiné Alps with him, and the ways that he pleases to take me. I cannot resist him. He has a damnable calm way, and I couldn't start till Sons had gone. How I am to do it at all, I cannot imagine: but apparently it must be. The chances of our meeting on

[1] *Rhoda Fleming.* The Autobiography, frequently spoken of, was never written.

the Continent this year are small, and Oh Tuck! I should have liked it so!

Lucas has just written to say that Tom Trollope follows Eleanor's Vic. in O. a W., so there is no immediate pressure for me, save to hand my proofs to friends. . . .

I have been to Goodwood with the Fitzgerald Champagne-Loo party: saw much life, which I wanted: backed wrong horses: lost £5. Certain, however, of knowing my lesson. Wise grows the loser, merely happy the winner. A great pastime! The scene was glorious. We elbowed dukes: jostled lords: were in a flower-garden of countesses.

Another publisher has requested me to read for him: discern, and select. I never refuse work. Of this more by and by. For the present, Mum—Oh! How my mouth waters, my heart leaps, at the thought of Tuck planted, as 'twere, in the very eye of the Gods, the rosey crowing British Cock! Store a thousand reminiscences for me. I cannot bear to think of leaving England just about the period of your return, and missing Demitroïa's smiles and rapid recitation of adventures and fun. There is something dreadful about Poco. He is not as other men. He won't believe in my impossibilities. Tuck! I am sorry we have admitted him amongst us, I am. It was your doing. Poco persists. He is never satisfied with my answers, if I do not assent. When once I do, or half do, he treats me as a man of honour, and I am fixed. He has sailed, as secure of me, as if he had me at Grenoble already. I shall send the S. R. to Chamounix a day after this letter. Sons are in good case. I hope your darlings are well: but of them you are at least well informed. If you had not thought proper to cut off communication between the great mother and me, I might have told you particulars of them.

Well!—Parliament 's up! I think Morley will do my

Ips. J. You see the 'Times' of course. I spare you paper news. Old Copsham is pretty sound, the Beetle soars.

> The Beetle soars, the Beetle spins,
> The Beetle is up in the air, Tuck;
> 'Twill crack Robin's crown
> As a stamp for his sins,
> Or make him defy old care.

Pray, write and say, how (the route) and when (the week) you return. Poco says I must start on the 22nd.

I suppose you have not come across Jessopp? He has promised to journey here, and I hope will take back Sons with him. My poor darling begins to see dimly again that holidays have a termination. 'If I had not such a kind master!' he remarks. 'I am very happy down there, Papa, you know!' You see, Tuck, he has his choice of different kinds of happiness. Blessed is he who can even look on such alternatives for a little human soul. I am twice blest, for that my friend is happy as well as my Son.

Tuck, I am going to bed. If I dream, sail thou across the vision, like a jolly monkish owl.

> My jolly Friar, now lift thy cowl
> And send me a laugh like a revelling owl.
> Were I lying and groaning in pits of fire,
> Thy laughter like water would fall, my Friar!

Good-night, Tuck. Good-night, dear Demitroïa. Good-night to the two young ladies! I say! Have they been much admired? 'Cause, we won't have our English wild roses stared at by 'mannikin' foreigners. Tuck, have you been a zealous guardian of those treasures? Alas! Who would have done that duty like me? There is a song called 'Poor Robin.' Sing it. Poco started

under a big full moon. I cry for a blessing upon you all, and sleep.

August 1, 1863.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I re-open to tell you what might have been the saddest tale I should ever have to tell.

Yesterday, W—— found Arthur out alone; put him on his horse, after shortening the stirrups, and suddenly let go the reins, for some purpose unknown; my little darling was carried off, fell, dangled to the stirrup and was dragged headlong over the furze. Not killed! Mercifully spared and no bones broken: but the shaking has been tremendous. He lies upstairs, and was miserable till this morning. Had he been kicked, or dragged on a road, I should have had a shattered heap of all I loved given to my arms. He was saved by a short length, and by his boot being pulled off. (He had elastic sides to them.) Izod says he is doing well. He can't keep anything on his stomach, and complains of his head: but he sleeps soundly and calmly: breathes peacefully. My poor lamb!—'Oh! is it a dream?' he said, as I undressed him after the accident. He can now recount all that happened till he was dragged. I think I may hope that he will recover, and be as sound as he was. Of poor W—— it is useless to speak. He is sorry, of course.—Don't be distressed, for you know I should not be quiet at heart if all did not look very hopeful. I have had a rude blow. I will write to you in 3 days. God bless you.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, ESHER, *August* 5, 1863.

MY DEAR TUCK,—Sons are on their legs again! The poor little fellow is very weak and somewhat shaky; covered with bruises: but vitally sound, bones alright.

Head uninjured, as far as human eye can reckon. This day he was allowed to get up. Yesterday he swallowed food without immediately rejecting it. He is not much the worse for his terrible mishap; quite cheerfully he slightly damns himself for mounting such a big horse, but excuses W——. Poor W—— has been in a great way. It is no comfort to me to make another miserable, when I am struck; and it is of no use to examine a catastrophe which I am sure he will not help to repeat.

Well, Tuck, my darling is returned to me out of the jaws of death. W—— says he is thankful I was spared the sight which will haunt him till he dies. He feared to look at Arthur, making sure that he was killed. Had it been on the road, or had the little fellow's boot not been of elastic sides, the worst must have happened. The boot wrenched off is somewhere on the common now, no one knows where. The distance Arthur was dragged was about 50 yards, as far as I can make out. There, Tuck! We have put up our Thank-song to the Supreme.

With this I forward the 'Saturday.' How little poor Ethel knows the danger her 'brother' has run. Break it to her quietly. Write a jolly long letter, if you can manage, saying whether you return before the 21st August. And by what route, when you do return. If things go well with Sons, I join Poco in Grenoble on the 24th, leaving England the 22nd. I should like to see you first.

Jessopp is en route homeward. He wrote from Aachen, and will probably be at Copsham on Saturday, if the news concerning Arthur does not bring him before. Say sweet things to Demitroïa, or let as many pass your douane as you consider for her good, and your own. Hoping the young ladies are not getting troublesome.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

August 11, 1863.

My dear Tuck,—This letter is a chance shot sent at you: for I doubt you will have left Chamounix before it arrives. My darling boy is going on alright. His head, though bruised and blue behind the ear, is sound, and his little innocent rump, which occasionally twitches him, is on the whole as well capable of taking what his conduct may earn him as yours, Tuck, or mine. The recovery is wonderful. I thought while I was at his side that first night of the accident that has befallen you and marked you for going through the performance for your Robin's comfort in future years. His boot (elastic sides saved him) still travels at a swift pace over the common, and will be re-discovered by a succeeding generation. Jessopp and his wife come on Friday. Arthur returns to them this day week. On the Thursday following I am off to join awful Poco; who has written to fix me irrevocably. He was at Bordeaux, at claret hard as he could. Impassively. Can you not see him? Full of this wine he was starting for the Pyrenean baths. Pretty well for a youngster! I cannot yet make you understand, that among the sons of the Great Mother, we count our time from the hour we first saw Tuck. He says: 'Tell Tuck he is to come home by Grenoble': be there (Hôtel de l'Europe) on the 24th, 'which is Robin's day of appointment.' Lord! How I wish you could do it! Eh? Tuck? I would go on upon this theme, but I have the ridiculous idea that I shall be bawling persuasion at Chamounix while you are a day distant across the Alps. My letter will catch you or be 24 hours too late. Still if you get this, think seriously of the possibility of your coming home by Grenoble, for I want to see you, mightily. I now desire to join Poco, for I feel as if I had been dragged

by a horse, and were blue behind the ear, with stern-quarters creaking rather. I want restoration. Tuck being absent, I go to Nature, in her sublimest. Greet Demitroïa and her chickens, from your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

PICCADILLY, *August* 20, 1863.

DEAR TUCK,—I am coming to you. Shall be at Hôtel Choiseul on Friday or Saturday. For Heaven's sake, be there. Make that we meet. I bring article in O. a W. America, etc., and Vie de Jésus by Renan, one of the finest works of this generation.—Yours in all love (with ½ to Demitroïa), GEORGE MEREDITH.

I start to-night, Newhaven and Dieppe.

To William Hardman.

Sept. 16, 1863.

TUCK!—I am of return. I come to arrive on Sunday, and amid such a press of work. I try to recover my native tongue. I must tell you of our travels by and by. Suffice, that Poco was at the station. (It is one of his vanities to be coolly punctual. He meets you as though he said 'You see, I promised to be sighting the North Pole at 9 A.M. on the 27th August 1891'). He was there. We went to the Grande Chartreuse, filling all the valleys on approach with the joint names of Tuck and Demitroïa. We slept there. We walked away with 9 bottles of Liqueur, and toiled over mountain passes. Through Dauphiné we walked. We walked ourselves into—silence. Our ordinary course was 10 hours per diem: sometimes it went to 13. We crossed Mont Genèvre into Italy: to Turin: to Lago Maggiore, then over Piedmontese mountains and lovely valleys into Switzerland to Geneva: thence to Dijon, where Poco, reaching me

the hand of friendship and shutting up the tongue of seduction, but parting in fact very prettily, set out for Liége: I for Paris, remaining there four days of delight, save for the absence of one.—Strange chapter of the Book of Sandars have we to narrate: a few little adventures: peculiarities of Poco (he has a right proper feeling towards Demitroïa; and the germs of reverence for Tuck), etc. We went too fast. We trudged like packmen. Still I have much enjoyed the trip: am better, fresher. The weather was so-so: neither very bad, nor Tuck-like. To Ethel my love, and to Nellie. To D.T. much warmth of affection. I heard at Geneva that the blessed little man goes on all well.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *Oct.* 21, 1863.

DEAR AND SWEET TUCK!—Your aid I rejoice in: your suggestions I for the most part follow, bowing the head of acquiescence to almost all your emendations. I believe you too, when you say you like the work, and the thought comforts me. The night of the day you read this, we dine at Poco's papa's table. You don't mention having heard from Chapman? I suppose they delay that they may consult me as to sum. I must see you before I speak as to my own SUM. Do you think that, as novels go now, I may fix something huge? or content me with a medium, and, snuffling a low content, say Such is the world? Or, if I can't get my price, take all the risk? You say that 'stress' is arbitrary—wrong. 'Her flanks' seem to strike one on the temple out of the printer's page. On the whole nothing could be neater than your criticism. Maxse is amusing. Objects to her conduct in going with Gambia 'because every girl is conscious that she should never trust herself alone

with a man,' etc. So: the sentimental worshipper will always make them animals. God bless you, Tuck.—Your loving ROBIN.

To Miss Katherine Vulliamy.

ESHER, SURREY, *Oct.* 28, 1863.

DEAR MISS VULLIAMY,—Thursday is unhappily my one day in the week when I am in harness and have to do Press-duty in London. On Monday, too, my engagement to go on a yachting expedition to the Channel Islands, holds me bound, I fear. But if this can be put off, I shall come to you gladly. I would much rather be in Mickleham. If the fates drag me away notwithstanding, I may hope to be permitted to call on you when I return? And, since it pains you that I should take 'long walks' to no purpose, I will also take the liberty of consulting you, d'avance; though, let me assure you again, the length of my journey is not to be deplored. As to my walking back at night: I am an associate with owls and nightjars, tramps and tinkers, who teach me nature and talk human nature to me. If I stay in Mickleham, do I not lose those privileges of a neighbour, who bows himself out to his own bed, and is therefore welcomed without formality? But, during my first visit I should be ungracious not to accept Mr. Vulliamy's invitation in all its particulars. I beg that you will thank him in my name.

On consideration, I thought that 'The Ordeal' could not do you harm: I can only trust that it will not offend. It deals with certain problems of life, and is therefore not of a milky quality. I am afraid that it requires stout reading. If you weather it, unshocked, you will find my other works less trying.—I am, dear Miss Vulliamy, most faithfully yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

Autumn 1863.

My own dear little Man!—We went on the water yesterday and fished; and I caught nothing; but Mr. Johnson hooked an enormous Jack of a quarter of a pound weight, which makes him very proud. I should like to have my darling boy with me. But you shall come here some day. There are beautiful meadows by the brink of the stream, on one side, and on the other, tall thick woods hanging close over the water. The Thames is very different from the river Inn or the Adige, or the Passeyr. It is quite smooth, and broad, and still; green with reflection of the trees and herbage, a capital place for you to bathe in.—Remember me to Tom, with whom I have no doubt you are getting on well. If you want anything, write me word of it. But I should like to hear from you, in any case, so sit down the day that you receive this, and write me a few lines, that I may hear from my dear little man the best news that can come to me—that he is quite well and quite happy.—Your loving Papa, George Meredith.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

Esher, *Autumn* 1863.

My dear Jessopp,—You say that you are anxious about my little man. You take the wind out of all my sails. Pardon me, but I shall have no peace till I hear whether I have dwelt on the word too strongly. If you are only anxious as to his mental briskness, I am not alarmed; and I know also that he 'potters' and plays after his own fashion and is not a boisterous fellow. But I am always open to fear for his physical health. His circulation is not rapid, his stomach is weak. He requires

to be watched. And the medicines of the old system do not suit him. Even for a trifling illness, I wish him to have the attendance of a homœopathic physician.—I should imagine that, if you see languor, it arises from indigestion — constitutional weakness of digestion. I should like him to have a course of cod-liver oil. If Mrs. Jessopp thinks good, I will send him some down from Savory & Moore's. And as a drink at dinner, some light claret mixed with Brighton Seltzer Water, might inspirit him. Would you allow of this? Any other wine, or beer, he must not take. I don't want to give trouble, but my heart broods over him, and I am unmanned at a breath of doubt concerning him.—I told you that his powers of acquisition would not be marked. But you will find by and by that he has sucked in much and made use of it in his own way. He will never be a gladiator: but he may be a thinker: I expect him to be a man of sense. If only—and here my sails flap the mast miserably. I would come down at once but my fresh work detains me. I have my hands full. Mrs. Jessopp will be moved to give me the state of the case. Will you tell her that a hamper will come for Arthur this week, containing among things more precious to him, the necessaries she wrote for. I had much to discourse on to you.

This, doubtless very silly, perturbation of the parental mind, chases the gabble from my tongue. God bless you. I have perhaps scarcely recovered from the shock of the accident during Arthur's holidays. The tone of a word relating to him makes me melancholy. For myself it takes much to make me hang out that yellow flag for an hour even.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

ESHER, SURREY, *Nov.* 3, 1863.

MY DEAR TUCK,—I am under extraordinary press of work and must also rewrite 2 'frolic' chapters: but I believe I shall see you on Thursday at least, even if you go into the heart of the gale, instead of dancing diabolus on vexed waters: for time enough to squeeze your hand. If the wind rages I shall yet the more wish myself by your side. I am whelmed with MSS.; full of envy of you free men, dejected as regards this novel, full of confidence for the future.—Ever your loving GEORGE M.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

COPSHAM COTTAGE,
ESHER, *Nov.* 12, 1863.

MY DEAR LITTLE MAN!—Island Pond is frozen over, and all the common looks as you saw it that Christmas morning when we walked over to Oatlands. Sandars is seen sometimes, with brown gaiters and a green tunic. His legs continue to grow, but his body does not. All your playthings, your theatre, books, etc., are put away, but you can get at them easily when you return. You can imagine how glad I shall be to hear your voice again in this neighbourhood; and if I were not working very hard, I should find the place too dull to live in, without you. Shall I hear at Christmas, that you have been learning, and have got a little more friendly with your Latin Grammar? Mind you don't waste your time. If you do your best, I shall be satisfied. Tell me the names of the boys you play with most, and what fellows you think are the best. I suppose you see Mr. Sandys. Have you been to Mrs. Clabburns? Let me be sure that I shall have a letter from you every week. When you have written to Captain Maxse, you must write to Mrs. Edward

Chapman, 'Camden Park, Tunbridge Wells.' The name of her house is 'Hollyshaw.' God bless my dear little man, prays his loving Papa, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

LONDON, *Nov.* 13, 1863.

DEAREST TUCK, my bonny wild duck; whom I might have addressed to 'off Flushing,' but for the fact that in 17 hours and ½ you come homeward rushing (turning a tail of marvellous breadth, I believe it still darkens the Dutchmen). I have written to Maxse and now let me ax ye, if Chapman & Hall are such men; with wonderful powers must your Robin possessed be, able to run with them fairly. 'Tis Frederick's fault, that no answer you had had; as letters he writes but rarely. Old Edward tells me this, and remarks, you shall quickly a cheque get, commensurate. As for the conduct of the 'Firm' he admits with a shrug that I properly censure it. The thing would be settled at once, but Fred is taking a little holiday (the sixth in 6 weeks)—Adieu.

When we meet next time will be my jolly day.

Signed: ROBIN.

To Mrs. Janet Ross.

ESHER, *Dec.* 1, 1863.

MY DEAREST JANET,—I have put back my letter, thinking I might get some book to offer you. You know that I recommended you for Renan's Vie de Jésus. Chapman has the offer of it, and would have done it, with your name mixed up with it. But our worthy and most discreet Bart declined to have your name mixed up with it. As things go, perhaps he was right. So the book went to Trübner.—You remember Adams, whom your mother sent to the altar first and subsequently to me? He is now flourishing, if the being able to buy a business comes

under that term. He consulted me after taking that step, or I think he would not have purchased Saunders and Otley's. But so it is. He is now Saunders & O. At his earnest request I advise him. Of course this is a secret. The position will put books for translation in my way, now and then. I had one the other day, but the translator's name was requisite. 'Une bouchée de pain.' Mrs. Gally does it. Murray called at Jeff's to get the copyright two days after Adams had secured it.

Now of myself a little. Can I ever forget my dearest and best woman-friend? And I must be cold of heart not to be touched by your faithfulness to your friendships. I, who let grief eat into me and never speak of it (partly because I despise the sympathy of fools and will not trouble my friends), am thereby rendered rather weak of expression at times. The battle is tough when one fights it all alone. And it is only at times that I awake from living in a darker world. But I am getting better, both in health and spirit. It is my punishment that I have to tell you what I never prove, that I love you and shall do so constantly. For I hold nothing dearer than your esteem, my dear! Writing letters seems a poor way of showing it, and yet even that I don't do! But you never vary. If you were like me, our lights would soon pass out of sight of one another, leaving me many regrets, certainly, but I acknowledge you to be the fixed star of this union, as you will be one of mine forever. So, pardon this sentimentalism. As I said, it 's my punishment to have to put my case in such a tone.—I fancy, too, that your instinct believes me true to the memory of our old kindness, careless of it though I appear?

The noble Bart gave me capital accounts of you and my lost Lady. The accident occurred to Arthur while she was at Poole. When he went to Norwich, I started at once for Italy to get fresh scenery and extraneous

excitement. I hoped to see her on my return: but I heard that she was not alone, and in the end as I was making up my mind to write for an audience, the news came that she had just reached Calais. I smote my undecided head. I am vexed beyond measure at having missed her. The news of her is so good that it tastes like fresh life to me. On this head, please give me particulars. And if she could be persuaded to write, how glad I should be!

I am here at Copsham still. Next year I shall have the place to myself, to buy or lease. I hope to be able to buy it, and then it may be made agreeable for friends. At present none but men can come. Some are usually here from Saturday to Monday. Of the Esherians I see next to nothing.—By the way, Izod behaved very nicely in his attendance on Arthur—just as you said would be the case. He was cheerful from the first. You can conceive my condition. From six in the evening to half-past four in the morning my darling was insensible, only saying, once: 'Oh! is it a dream!' and staring wildly. He had on elastic boots, and this fact saved him. If the boot had not come off, he would have been dragged till—I have looked over into the pit. I don't think I misbehaved myself and I certainly did not reproach poor W——, of whose folly we need not speak, seeing that he won't renew it. There is every reason to feel sure that Arthur has taken no damage whatever, nor, I think, is his pluck at all lessened.

Your Holbeins! I went to get them done, and was told that the Kensington Museum had been remonstrated with by photographers generally, and had abandoned the work. I tried to get Dante Rossetti to give me his. I have thought of numerous things to supplant them, but jewels seem the only resource, though I can't bear to see them either on arm, neck, or fingers. You will receive something or other (overlooking my bad taste) with my

novel in January. It is called 'Emilia in England' antiposed to 'Emilia in Italy,' which is to follow—both in 3 vols. The first is a contrast between a girl of simplicity and passion and our English sentimental, socially-aspiring damsels. The second (in Italy) is vivid narrative (or should be). I hope you will like it:—I can't guess whether you will. You saw, I suppose, that the Saturday Review has gently whipped me for 'Modern Love.' I am not the worse. And doubtless the writer meant well. I regret to say that I can't give up writing poetry, which keeps your poet poor.

You were charmed with Kinglake's book? In style it beats anything going, but in judgment it is bad, and it cannot take place as a piece of artistic history. Here is Maxse writing hard against it, he being a reverent admirer of Lord Raglan and a just man. Kinglake's treatment of the French is simply mean.—And mean too is the position England assumes as critic everywhere—as actor nowhere, if it can be helped. We are certainly in a mess about this Congress, and the French alliance is a matter of the past.

I read the 'Times' Alexandrian correspondent diligently to catch the friend's hand behind the official pen.[1]

How good of you to look forward to my little man's future! Who knows? He might be found fit to be a merchant, and what offer could be better than yours? But I must first get at his inclinations and try his strength.

Now, my dearest good Janet, adieu for a space—till I repeat it. Write to me. Give my warm regards to your husband, and know me ever, your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Arthur comes home on the 23rd. He will write to you before the month closes.

[1] Mrs. Ross was now acting as a correspondent of the *Times* in Egypt.

To William Hardman.

Dec. 1, 1863.

DEAREST LOVELY TUCK,—I dine with Maxse at the 'Garrick' to-morrow, and as I want to converse with you on the matter of your objections to points in 'Emilia,' I should like to know whether you can give me a bed, 'cause if you can you will: which is established in my mind, but if you can will you send a line to Chapman & Hall's, or better to Maxse, at the 'Garrick,' containing the wished word for me. Yes, say to Maxse at the Garrick (with my initials in the corner of the address), and then I 'll come to talk and fight him: but with full acknowledgement of the soundness of some of his criticism and value of his advice. I am glad that Tuck likes it on the whole. It 's impossible to tell him what difficulty I get myself into by altering my original conception of the scheme.—Your own ROBIN.

To Mrs. Jessopp.

ESHER, *Dec.* 1863.

MY DEAR MRS. JESSOPP,—The Son blooms in the air of home. How could I have stopped away from my living heart so long? But I have him and won't moan that it 's only for six weeks. More than ever do I thank the blessed chance that inspired you to make yourselves known to me and render me the most deeply indebted of men. For, I see not only that every care is taken of my darling under your roof, but that happiness is his vital air there. He breathes it. Shall he not be robust in spirit? At least I have faith in the experiment.

Now, I have an engagement to go to my friend Maxse with Arthur next month—a visit long delayed by me and not to be put off. But, you must come to me this time . . . will you not? I should be grieved to miss

you! I wish to know when you are to be in London . . . the date! And I will conform to it. Please reply; so that I may write to my now impatient sea-captain, who will not believe that I mean to be with him at all. And tell me of Gordon, and of your Christmas.

Thackeray's death startled and grieved me. And I, who think I should be capable of eyeing the pitch-black King if he knocked for me in the night!—Alas for those who do not throw the beetle!—Of Emilia I cannot speak. She grieves me. I have never so cut about a created thing. There's good work in her: but the work? That note of interrogation is in person.—Your faithful

George Meredith.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

Esher, *Jan.* 1864.

My dear Jessopp,—Shall you be in Town and visible to me, on Wednesday, on Thursday, on Friday week?

Do, write and tell me you are well: for, all my friends are croaking; fog is about: blue mould sits on the fair aspect of Companionship, and I want to know that somebody's all right. My son is all right. I am not all right. Emilia Belloni is not all right. She has worried me beyond measure, and couldn't expect to be all right. She will be, when she's in Italy. As to character, I think you will have no doubt of her flesh and blood. How you will like the soul of the damsel, I can't guess. Out in February.

Are you rejoicing at an Heir to England's Throne? Have you not admired the loyal leaders of Jeames de la Pluche in the 'Times'?—My Prins! It is of course matter for quiet hearty congratulation, but I confess that this excited flunkeyism of our Press makes one even look at the other extreme and see a manliness in the American.

Your words on Norwich School Prize-Day appeared in I. J.[1]

Arthur sends his love to Mrs. Jessopp, and I ask you, what privileges are these of his years that enable him to send that pretty wheedling word, while I have to content myself with 'regards'! I am almost tempted to say with exclamatory, dramatic, cockney bards, 'forsooth,' after it. And I mean so much more, don't you see! But there are things one endures with one's acceptance into practical life—collars likewise. When collars and tail-coats are abolished,—well! I shouldn't like to be photographed then. However, till I wear that broad grin, I am your loving GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, *Jan.* 12, 1864.

My bones, dear Tuck, are more eloquent to me of the ball on Friday night than I shall be to you. Old Parsimony must be right. 'You changed thick breeches for thin, thick socks and boots for thin capering patents, and out in that ther' frost, and then wonders you feels akins in your bones and calls it indigestion and I——'s wine . . .' Yesterday I walked to Mickleham with Sons, taking him on my back returning, and then 2 miles in a fly, so that he wasn't tired. It didn't cure me. I shiver and feel like an ancient frame. The Ball? I try to remove the mists of jaundice, but I cannot get a view of it without some yellow. It was frightful to me. The young women (saving the Clarke girls) were hideous, the old ones talked of the weather and shivered, as I do now at the recollection of my suffering.

My dear Tuck, if you want a sight of the room, open your piano lid; strike on the notes and see the little

[1] *Ipswich Journal.*

bobbing heads in the interior. They bob to some purpose, but oh! this sight! Esher's young men were hardly better than its females—I use the word in all its offensiveness. At 12 midnight supper. Champagne Cup (small beer, sweetened, with a fizz) to wash down incarnate dyspepsia in a room ½ frost ½ fire. All partook of Champagne-cup. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I pressed it upon 2; filling my own glass at the same time, and speeding it down the table with admirable dexterity. I left at 2 A.M. I am told that some young men, called upon by I—— to cheer the ladies, the hostesses of the evening, did so until they were drunk. I pardon their frail stomachs. W——, after a bottle of Moselle, gave a sniff and lit a cigar, and refused to go. But that Robin always keeps his appointments, he would have followed the captain's example. I walked to Esher and walked home, and precious co-wo-wo-wold it was, Tuck. Yes, a short article on Wn. Australia would help me. I do not think I can come to you on Thursday. On Friday to Maxse.

My Jeames's expressions of joy in the 'Times' on the Royal Baby have been magnificent, and should procure for the family la Pluche, a patent of nobility. Love to that changeful creature Demitroïa. I send you proofs of 'Emilia.' Forward them to Johnson, Bullion Office, Bank.—Your loving

ROBIN.

To Captain Maxse.

ESHER, 1864.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I had thought of 'Hamble Ridge,' and also of 'Hamble Mount,' which latter, though more common, is perhaps preferable. Either one would do very well. Is there any characteristic of the river to give it christening? as a reach, a bluff—'Hamble Reach' would not sound ill. We should sit together and give it

a title over a cup of claret. Any trees to distinguish it?—'Hamble Willows,' 'Hamble Elms,' etc.—The site of the House impresses me favourably. I must have for my daily meal a good plateful of sky; and the sun must drop into it, or I'm not satisfied. I feed on him and the field he traverses. This, apparently, you will get.—How is health with you? I progress excellently, but only to get into a higher circle of desires and hopes, despairs and dreams. And if a fair face touches me, what is there for me but to moan at my loss of philosophy? Can I go to her and say, 'Love me'? She sucks my comfort from my life, and that's all. Or, not all! It's experience!—for this were we born. My philosophy distils again to just that bitter drop.—'Emilia' in a fortnight positively. Poor little woman! What will the British P. say to a Finis that holds aloft no nuptial torch? All she does, at the conclusion, is to leave England. Perhaps you, too, will be disappointed. I trust not.

Say to Mrs. Maxse that I shall be very anxious to be, if not the first, one of the first of her guests at Hamble the, as yet, unnamed. And we will go and hear the nightingales, as you and I did, my dear fellow, when they chuckled a love-snatch and your heart had not found a home. Note 'Frost on the May-night' close at the end of 'Emilia.'—You will receive your copy the day she appears. Shall you haply review the production? It's my undertaking—the risk mine and the uncounted profits. I told Chapman I should want a good sum, and did not object to publish the book myself. He thought the closing alternative best, and it may be for me.—What are you reading? What meditating? The Fates are stirring with a mighty spoon at this hour.—May Heaven bless you and yours through it all and soon give me sight of you!—Your loving GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

Jan. 21, 1864.

SWEET TUCK,—I bring Sons to go to Rossetti to have his face taken. If I can I will get away and sleep at Gordon Square. Haply he mayn't be at home. I shall not be later than ½ past ten.—Your loving and grateful

ROBIN.

Love to the fickle one.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

ESHER.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—As to the book! One of Chapman & Hall's men put a paper on it, with your name, and returned it. He has written to Mudie to that effect; but stupidly delayed doing so. The matter must be set right in a few days, and I am sorry exceedingly that your kindness should have given you such bother.—I met Clabburn and Sandys the other night at Arthur Lewis's. Sandys has some fine conceptions for pictures. Altogether, he is one of the most remarkable of the 'brushes' of our day, with the quaintest stolid Briton way of looking at general things. But artists see their square of canvas and little more—add the gilt frame. Sandys has a romantic turn that lets me feed on him.—What you say of Arthur requiring to make blood to be lively in body and mind, is my view and shows me that we strike one note. Let men make good blood, I constantly cry. I hold that to be rightly materialist—to understand and take nature as she is—is to get on the true divine highroad. That we should attain to a healthy humanity, is surely the most pleasing thing in God's sight. Now, of another matter. The book is to be published at my risk and for my profit. It will be out in a fortnight. In a month from that date I can draw something. Meantime, if any pressure should be perchance on you, you, my friend,



Arthur G. Meredith
From a painting by D. G. Rossetti

will let me know, and I will get what is wanted and forward it. Nothing but my carelessness puts me behind in my money accounts. I make, apart from novels, enough for Arthur and myself. It comes and goes. If this novel does not pay well, I shall retrench rigidly, book my bills, deny friends, have no purse, and look above the head of the crossing-sweeper. I know that you understand how the delay has been superinduced. It will hardly occur again. I have trusted to your good heart in full faith, as doubtless you feel. That I should at all inconvenience you is not necessary, and you will always speak openly on that head—as I am now acting—will you not? The novel has good points, and some of my worst ones. It has no plot albeit a current series of events: but being based on character and continuous development, it is not unlikely to miss a striking success.

But, hail to the Beetle! verily I have made new blood by its aid, of the pure crimson, from which great Poesies and stern conception should flow! I am growing fuller of hope and thirst for work. I begin to believe again that I may do 'something.' Judge me not by this present performance!—I think I may say that I will be with you, Heaven consenting, the middle of this month. Is Arthur correct when he talks of holidays commencing the 23rd of March?—We shall have much to talk over; and, by the way, Alys has not arrived, O man whose energy did win the admiration of Sandys and myself jointly! I want to see it; I want to see you. Give Mrs. Jessopp my warmest greeting. My heart is with her who watches over my boy.

To William Hardman.

Esher, *Feb.* 24, 1864.

My dear Tuck,—I have been away from the Cot. I am direly disturbed at my enforced absence from you

and Demitroïa and—the G. M.! Take G. M. from the G. M. what remains? Nothing. I feel as nothing. There is an extraordinary fatality about Bullion. He crosses our star, Tuck. Not satisfied with robbing you of me, he must now take Morison.

What a Thursday evening I shall pass in strong light of Fancy's contrast. . . . All pleasure attend you! Success wait on you! Smooth flow the Sauces! May the fillets tender be! Nor aught to ruffle the Olympian brows of Tuck, the Host.—Being the prayer of his loving

ROBIN.

To William Hardman.

March 1, 1864.

MY DEAREST TUCK,—Your invitation is a mockery. You have combined with Circumstance to keep me from a sight of the Great M. On Wednesday to Morison to the 'Wandering Minstrels' at Lord Edward Fitzgerald's after dining with Arthur Lewis: on Friday to a dinner here: on Saturday Copsham reception. Sunday, guests. Monday, Mickleham: and so on. Damn you, Tuck! What do you mean by it? And, Oh Lord! I must retrench, for I am going to publish on my own account. I give no more to crossing-sweepers, and drink small beer, if Emilia fail to hit her mark. Give my respectful compliments to your Mama, and I hope your tum-tum is stronger, old Boy? I still improve. Since I can't see you, write like a dear fellow, and tell me of yourself, Demitroïa and the chicks.—Arthur flourishes.—Your loving

G. M.

To Mrs. Jessopp.

March 1864.

MY DEAR MRS. JESSOPP,—May I beg you to give my little man, on my behalf, five shillings? He writes for half-a-crown, but we double it.

I have been disturbed of late at not hearing from him. He now says, that he has written. The letter did not arrive. Would it be as well to question him on the point, and make inquiries of the housekeeper?

I am so busy and bothered with work (consequently doing it ill and ——— wrathful and ——— utterly unworthy to hold pen to you) that I break off without a reply to your remembered last letter. Though, with regard to the Sunday arrangements at the School. Now, let me assure you, O fair advocate, that I think you make wonderful improvements on a state of things rather hurtful to Nature in her untamed years. Hurtful to her, and therefore she has her revenge: a not unholy thing when we see it to be simply the action of violated laws. Young blood will not sit so frequently, and so long, on the seventh day, without a desire to stir, which becomes in the brain a remonstrance.

I may say of my dear little fellow that he was not at all complaining when he spoke to me: but casually stated a fact common to boys. Another, too, it seems, thinks even the seventh day in Norwich a hard day: 'as hard or harder than any one of the other six.'—The truth is, that our Puritanism is beginning to weary even the English world, and much as you are disposed to lighten the claims of worship to poor little fellows, your being in East Anglia must of a necessity keep you behind us.

Do forgive me for this! I feel already that the wind is East on me!

I hope my little man continues to satisfy you? His master—it is as I predicted. But, I am sure things will turn out better by and by: and can wait—content that he should be under your care.—With kindest good fellowship salute to your husband, I am your most faithful, contrite GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

ESHER, 1864.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—Morley's 'Writers before Chaucer' is not 'worth buying,' seeing that I am about to bring this book to you.

Your cheery letter gave me particular peace of mind on a matter that worried me. I trust all will go tolerably well with the book, though what the public will make of 3 vols. without a climax of incident (Finis waving no nuptial torch)—the climax being all in a development of character—I am at a loss to imagine; and so wait patiently, hoping for here and there a critic to interpret me to the multitude.

As to your proposal (for the Whist I 'll be one, notwithstanding that I am led to suppose Mrs. Jessopp plays comme quatre !)—I must let the boy decide; and think he 'll be for Copsham in the county of Surrey. I expect to be able to come to you next Saturday. Or, if Arthur comes to me, shall I bring him back, and stay for a longer term ? I know what sharp feminine eyes will discern in this. It really isn't base treason—indeed ! I am at her mercy. Write by return of post, that I may get the letter before I leave here.—Yours ever, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE,
NORWICH, *April* 6, 1864.

MY DEAR TUCK,—You will have received a copy of 'Emilia' before this. Though a letter of yours sent to Chapman & Hall was a week old, the laughter in it was fresh. And the picture of Tuck with a chumper in his hand talking majestic about his new domain will not speedily pass into spectral tints. I am very busy. To save myself from poetry (which I haven't done) I am

writing a few stories, and shall soon be at a regular jog-trot, and in a new style. Health becoming really good; conception blooming. I foresee that I shall get knocks on the head from reviewers, and should like to be out of hearing for 3 months, but Courage! I am here with the Son, who is in good condition. . . .

I have a work on my hands to correct; while the boys are in school. 'Mazzini's Works.' There 's a Red Cloak for you, Sir John! With this, a tale, sketch of novel, etc., my hours are occupied. Write, and give me Demitroïa's comments—they 'll be cruel. Assure me of your love, old boy! And know me, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

May 1864.

RESPECTED SIR,—Indeed if you are that same Tuck whom I knew, which is possible; a-be it you no longer, as is told me, wear a waistcoat, boasting the power to embrace 2 sacks of potatoes: if you are the same, I know positively that your heart at least will not have diminished and that I am not ejected from it during its daily operations. I have been that busy—but more, I have besides had engagements so numerous—and besides, here 's a man staying with me, Sandys, the artist, painting a great picture of Spring. He came down here when I came. He will remain probably 2 weeks longer. Dear sir, may I bring him over on Sunday? My dear Old Boy (for it must be you though you do talk so strange) I am very anxious to see you. I have been to Norwich, to the Isle of Wight, to Tunbridge Wells: I think I shall have to go to Italy, for everybody says 'Emilia in Italy' should be forthcoming as speedily as may be: and I want a little local colour. You will like Sandys. He is a fine painter and a good fellow. As regards myself, and that 's what

you like to hear of, I know, I am working at divers things: Wayside Pieces, Odes (To Garibaldi and Beethoven), Sonnets, 'Emilia in Italy,'[1] the Autobiographic Tale, heaps of MSS. Are not my hands full? So 's my heart, but there 's always a comfortable chamber there for you both. I was at Cambridge during Newmarket week with certain undergraduates. The Cook of Trinity distinguished himself nightly.

I rode on Beacon turf, but did not bet. I wanted to study the scene, and have done so. I saw my Prins.

I am in the best of spirits, as perhaps you divine. Health is good and so is power to work, and one daren't pray for more. They elected me for the Garrick. My Tuck, to whom the honour. How is Poco? There 's no room for him here, or I should have made the request for his society. Write to your much-tried friend, and never judge him harshly.

I have an instinct that Demitroïa has found more excuses for me than you have.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Ethel and Nellie must be well, of course, since they are barely mentioned. My love to them.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

ESHER, *May* 18, 1864.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—The (Ipswich) Journal is so full of advertisements that I am postponed, anent the notice of Sermons, weekly, and can't predicate when it will appear. Meantime, send a volume to C. Warren Adams, Esq., 66 Brook St., Hanover Square. He will review it (and at least without hostility) in the Church and State Review: I hope this month, but am not certain. I shall try to get a fellow to notice them in a general discussion

[1] Later named 'Vittoria.'

of the subject of school sermons. I am vexed and irritated at the treatment you receive: but it is of this world.—I get slaps for having written 'Emilia.' I am 'eminently' this or that, unpleasant, in Review style. Have you ever met a Reviewer? It 's curious to see how small this thing that stings can be.—She moves, which is good. A favourable touch to her in the 'Saturday' or 'Times' would launch her into more than the middle of a 2nd edition. I am hard at work on 'Emilia in Italy':—All story, tell Mrs. Jessopp: no philosopher present: action, excitement, holding of your breath, chilling horror, classic sensation. I hope to get finished in the Autumn. I have also in hand an Autobiography and 'The Adventures of Richmond Roy, and his friend Contrivance Jack: Being the History of Two Rising Men,'—and to be a spanking bid for popularity on the part of this writer.

I say! what a charming line of Rail from Norwich to London by way of Ipswich. But apparently little known, for those who took the journey from Norwich on a day last month were alone in the carriage the entire length of the route; and really it is hard, for a young lady demands all your resources to amuse her: and I wonder whether I did! She wants a photograph of the little man. Could one be got for her? She is well, practising music early, and I still wonder why both of you won't think her very handsome. The will is clearly manifested in your refusal to do so. I mean, handsome, of that style. Some vitality being wanted; but the lack of it practically compensated by so very much sweetness. Thus may a cold but friendly spectator speak of her!

Sandys will have been with me next Friday just three weeks. He is painting country for background of a picture of the maiden Spring.

'Then came fair May, the fairest maid on earth,'

with heaps of flowers at her feet and immense periwigs of apple-blossom about her poll. She with a look of unconsciousness and a rainbow over her head and such larks in the sky: a nice girl. We walk hard, though Sandys is not much of a leg at it and develops groaning feet, etc. At 7½ we dine and are uproarious, and I wish and he wishes you were with us. Tom Taylor speaks well of his work in the Academy. I suppose he will be here about a month longer, he has so much to do. He is going to give me a drawing of Arthur, and also of—what 's the name? I 've forgotten the name of the person, but am not the less grateful for his kindness. This latter in the time to come. I ask him whether he has a message for you, and he says (or tries to say) that one never knows what message to send to those one cares for, except that he 'd be glad if you were here.

Since we parted I 've been to Tunbridge Wells, to Ventnor, to Cambridge, and half over Surrey. I came here first with Sandys, so you may imagine that I haven't had much time to spare. All kind things to Mrs. Jessopp! The young lady who made her acquaintance in Norwich says innumerable kind things of her. (I don't mention what is the Norwich return for this ingenuous heartiness.) Addio, dear friend.—I am your loving

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

May 29, 1864.

My dearest Tuck,—I daresay you have thought that something was going on to make my love for you seem less faithful and constant than it was. I have an immense deal to tell you, and something to ask you to do. But you must remain mystified until we meet. I would come to-day, but Lethbridge (Smith's partner) is here, and I cannot leave him. Try to hold yourself disengaged to

come on a mission with me next Wednesday. You will be away all night, but Demitroïa will excuse it, seeing that it is to make me a new man. I will come on Monday evening or Tuesday afternoon. I hope to get 'Emilia in Italy' into the Cornhill. Tell my dearest D. that she will be launched on a sea of adventure and excitement, and by the way, thank her for the pretty notice I saw to-day in the 'Saturday.' She gives her criticism very gently. But (tell her this) there is an end now to my working with puppets. I enter active life with my people, and my resolve to merit money,—which should mean, to make it. Health sound, and brain in fine working order. I must stop or I shall be rushing into betraying exclamations. It will not be a severe task for you, this service I require of my friend. D. at your elbow starts one brilliant guess. She is right. Good-bye.—Your loving GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

MICKLEHAM, *June* 1, 1864.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Here the word is that Saturday will do better. Also will that suit you? Please send word to Ch. & H.'s. I shall come to Mickleham on Friday and my M. says we will meet you at Leatherhead station on Saturday, if you will assure us of the train you will come by. She adds that you are to speak your full conviction of me, seeing that her Papa can't bear to lose her, though he always lets his daughters have their way in these matters, sauf the guarantee of moral character and sufficient pecuniary resources, these are the points. God bless you, and take all my thanks for your good heart (and D.'s) to me in this the closest business that ever hugged my heart.—Your own GEORGE M.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

ESHER, *June* 6, 1864.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—It is time that your friend should show you a clean breast.—He loves a woman as he never yet loved, and she for the first time has let her heart escape her. She is not unknown to you, as you both immediately divine. She is the sweetest person I have ever known, and is of the family which above all others I respect and esteem. Her father is a just and good man; her sisters are pure gentlewomen: she is of a most affectionate and loving nature. May I be worthy of the love she gives me!

Your surprise over, you will possibly think me rash. My friends, who know of this, think me fortunate, on reflection. They see that I shall now first live; that I shall work as I have never yet done; and that, to speak materially, marriage will not increase the expenses of a man hitherto very careless. My hope stands like a fixed lamp in my brain. I know that I can work in an altogether different fashion, and that with a wife and such a wife by my side, I shall taste some of the holiness of this mortal world and be new-risen in it. Already the spur is acting, and health comes, energy comes. I feel that I can do things well, and not haphazard, as heretofore. . . . I can hardly make less than eight hundred, reckoning modestly. And I shall now hold the purse-strings warily.

I shall not speak to Arthur till he is with me. She is very fond of him, and will be his friend. He will find a home where I have found one.

I cannot play at life. I loved her when we were in Norwich. 'Cathedralising' would not otherwise have been my occupation. I believe that I do her good: I know that she feels it. Me she fills with such deep and

reverent emotion that I can hardly think it the action of a human creature merely. I seem to trace a fable thus far developed by blessed angels in the skies. She has been reserved for me, my friend. It was seen that I could love a woman, and one has been given to me to love. Her love for me is certain. I hold her strongly in my hand. Write—I thirst to hear words from you. Address to Piccadilly. And if Mrs. Jessopp can feel that she can congratulate my beloved and thank her for loving me—Ah! will she let her know this?—her address is

Miss Marie Vulliamy,
Mickleham,
near Dorking,
Surrey.

Also, tell Mrs. Jessopp that 'Emilia' is running very fast in Italy, and that we may hope to see the damsel of the fiery South (no longer tripped and dogged by Philosopher or analyst) by late Autumn. I have an arrangement to do a serial for 'Once a Week,' and a series of wayside pieces for the 'Cornhill,' Sandys illustrating, is on the tapis. These will ultimately form a volume special and I hope popular. Adieu to you both! Will two be welcome some day? She has ventured to say that she hopes so.
—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

June 6, 1864.

Esher is the address, and your letter to Mickleham astonished us all. I read it and handed it to my beloved, who said—'How heartily he writes! he must be one of your true friends.' Pray, write to her at once, if you have the kindly impulse. It will please her, for I have talked much of you and my feeling for you: of your

happiness with your beloved, which she would rival. And she wishes to feel that my friends are to be hers. The letter will be a charming surprise to her. An assurance also that I am cared for, here and there, and by worthy men. Your wife is sure to love her. If God gives her to me, I may certainly say that our wives will be as much heart in heart as we are. We shall see one another more. Ah! when you speak of Ploverfield for us during the first sweet days of our union, you touch me deeply and breathe fair auspices. I shall accept, if it can be arranged. I could not choose another place while that door stood open. My friend, I have written of love and never felt it till now.—I have much to pass through in raking up my history with the first woman that held me. But I would pass through fire for my darling, and all that I have to endure seems little for the immense gain I hope to get. When her hand rests in mine, the world seems to hold its breath, and the sun is moveless. I take hold of Eternity. I love her.—She is intensely emotional, but without expression for it, save in music. I call her my dumb poet. But when she is at the piano, she is not dumb. She has a divine touch on the notes.—Yes, she is very fond of the boy. Not at all in a gushing way, but fond of him as a good little fellow, whom she trusts to make her friend. As to her family: the old man is a good and just old man, who displays the qualities by which he made what fortune he has. There are three sons, four daughters. The sons are all in business in France—wool manufacturers, or something. They and the girls were strictly brought up at home at Nonancourt in Normandy. Marie was seventeen when seven years ago they came to England. They have been about five years in Mickleham Vale. On Saturday next, Kitty, the third—the one preceding my beloved—is to be married at the little church: Marie

being first bridesmaid, and I shall see her. The eldest sister is married to a French officer, who has an estate in Dauphiné, and is a good working soldier—'a rough diamond,' says Marie. The eldest unmarried sister, Betty, is a person of remarkable accomplishments and very clear intellect, vivacious and actively religious: therefore tolerant, charitable, and of a most pure heart. Kitty, the present bride, takes her Christianity with more emotion: she teaches the children of the parish, while Betty every Sunday evening has a congregation of the men and women in a barn. Do you smile? Much good has been done by these two women. I saw last Sunday a man rescued by Betty from inveterate drunkenness, and happy. They—indeed all of them, are thoroughly loved by the poor throughout the district, and respected by all but the party clergyman, who declares that their behaviour (Betty chief culprit) has been a scandal, and that he will countenance none of them—neither marry them, bury them, nor in any way bless them. I heard him preach last Sunday morning, and Oh! alas for Orthodoxy! Marie, however (she has strong common sense, as have all real emotional natures), takes her own view, and says she thinks Betty wrong in taking the clergyman's work out of his hands. 'But if he doesn't do it?' 'Yes, but his curate is anxious to try, and Betty has such influence, and speaks so closely to the hearts of the poor, that they will listen to no one else.'—The controversy is at that point. Marie does not go to the barn: but, to please her sister, is willing, now that Kitty goes, to do her best among the children, until she likewise is led away.—To Ploverfield? I sound the echoes of the future. Oh! is it to be? There could not be a fairer, sweeter companion, or one who would more perfectly wed with me. She tries to make me understand her faults. I spell at them like a small boy

with his fingers upon words of one syllable. Of course some faults exist. But she has a growing mind and a developing nature. Love is doing wonders with her.—I could write on for hours, but I have letters and work calling loudly stop. We shall live, I fancy, about my present distance from London. But where to find a cottage of the kind I require, is the problem. What you say of income is sensible, and has not been unthought of by me. If I did not feel courage in my heart and a strong light in my brain, I should not dare to advance in this path; but in those vital points I have full promise. I shall now write in a different manner. We will speak further on the subject when we meet. Let me know what day you think I may select to present you. The week after this will exactly do. And the Monday or Tuesday of it would be the best days, if possible; or add, the Wednesday. Try to give her the whole day, so that you may hear her play in the evening, and see her in all her lights and shades, and know the family—the best specimen of the middle-class that I have ever seen—pure gentlewomen, to call one of whom wife and the rest sisters is a great honour and blessing. God bless you, dear fellow. This letter and all the tenderness of my heart is for Mrs. Maxse as well as for yourself. My kindest wishes for Boy.—I am ever your loving

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

June 7, 1864.

My dearest Tuck,—She wishes to see Esher, and a friend drives her over to-morrow. It has been postponed once or twice . . . What do you think of her? Is she not worth anything or all in the world? And she likes you so much—thinks, I believe, better of me for having such a friend, and hopes that Mrs. Hardman may

take to her. I never touched so pure and so conscience-clear a heart. My own is almost abashed to think itself beloved by such a creature. The day when she is to be mine blinds me. Will it come? It flickers like lightning in my brain. It will not burn steadily. I can't grasp it. What does this mean?—I am troubled, but can work.—Your loving GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

LONDON, 1864.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I have told my darling girl that you will come and inspect her on Monday. She, having a great heart, stands prepared, and a hope is expressed that you will consent to dine there. We will sleep at the Inn or walk home to Esher, just as you think fit. And how will you arrange to come? Will you come to Esher in the morning and walk to Mickleham in the afternoon? In that case she will march to meet us. Or will you get out of the train at Guildford and take another that will (see train book) put you down at Dorking or Box-hill station. In that case, we should march to meet you. I confess I should like to see you first; for I am told by a lady that she would not be considered handsome though she is perfectly charming in manner and in face. I tell you this with a rueful drop of the chin and a yearning strain of the eye. You are to suppose that I have not called her handsome.

Give my dearest regards, my thanks, my kindest wishes, to Mrs. Maxse, who speaks so tenderly of her and me. Write by return post.—I am ever your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

At the Sign of 'The Angel,'
Mickleham, *July* 12, 1864.

Beloved Family Hardman,—And here is Marie writing a race with me by my side! The difficulties have been smoothed; we have indeed plunged through powerful conflicts, and truly like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, we likewise have passed through fire, and by miracle we bore it and rose from it, fresh, fragrant—did ever man have such a sweet reward? And behold her lashing her dear wits for next word, and pretending, all the while, to be looking at her sister-in-law! She has got it!—No. Yes, she is off! Well, Tuck, I trust our fight is nearly over. The present design is, that we engage a furnished house for a year, and meantime look about for a house that will suit us. I, your Robin, emboldened by his new and most lovely prospects, have done this: I said to Chapman's, I have done much, will do more: will be in Piccadilly 3 afternoons in the week: will write all your letters anent MSS.: will occasionally, when imperative, see the authors (my name not being given) and so forth: thus, as Tuck sees, becoming a chief person, and at no great cost, and with suitable addition to pay. It should be £300. It shall not be less than £250. The matter will be settled in a week. Both Edward and Fredk. were glad of the work I had undertaken to do. Don't my Tuck approve? I know that Demitroïa does. Indeed the family Hardman does, I know. It will be a proper addition to our means, and the economical talk of my blessed Marie is such delicious music! 'Our towels will cost—so much: our sheets—so much; and you mustn't mind its being so dear,' etc. Tuck, you talk of wisdom and you talk of poetry: but beat that, if you can! Adams, do you know, is doing

the 'Career of the Alabama.'[1] He heard of Semmes putting into Cherbourg: started: reached him, after marvellous difficulties with Port Admirals and gens d'armes, on the very eve of his fight with the Kearsage. Semmes hailed him with joy; he 'wanted some one to whom to confide his papers, and was despairing of finding one.' Gave the papers (journals, etc. Log) to Adams, to do as he pleased with them. I have done the first and last chapter—offered to do the whole, but Adams could only wait five days to get the book out; so I declined this fiery proximity to the printers' devil. Adams has been in a dressing-gown ever since, is blue about the chin, as if blown up in a recent naval engagement, and has generally the appearance of an elongated Mantalini returned to his wife, but legless. By the way, there 's a highly appreciative summary of my literary deeds in a lengthy article in the Westminster Review. The New Novel (Vittoria) is going on swimmingly. Sandys has heard the first 150 pages, and says it is extremely interesting, and likely to be by far the best thing I have done. Lucas is charmed with the sketch of the Autobiography; but owing to certain changes going on in relation to O. a W. he has not yet sent word for me to start away. Thus we are in a little uncertainty. Oh Lord! Tuck, here 's my heart swelling and sinking like night waves pressing to a beacon-light. Oh! that it were over. My compliments to Albrecht, with whom I hope to make acquaintance: Poco and myself intend to compose an Essay on 'The Occurrences,' illustrated by the meeting in this world of Albrecht and Tuck.

I had intended to walk over to Hampton and see your darlings before writing, but this is Wednesday, and I shall have no afternoon to myself before Saturday, the day

[1] Probably *The Cruise of the Alabama and the Sumter* (Saunders, Otley and Co., 1864).

you name as the last for Bellagio. More letters, dear old boy!

God bless you both, and keep you jolly!

WE realise your happiness! Aha! WE!—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

PLOVERFIELD, BURSLEDON,
SOUTHAMPTON, *July* 1864.

MY DEAR AND GOOD FRIEND!—I know that you are excusing my singular way of treating you.

There will be provision and beds at Copsham on Monday for you and Arthur; a carriage shall be provided to bring you on to Mickleham, my friend Hardman will call for you and take you up. The ceremony will have to be performed early, for Hardman has to make a rush to be in Liverpool at a brother-in-law's marriage the day following.

You have perfect faith in me—I feel it. I have a new arrangement to settle with Ch. & Hall: I expect to get the conductorship of a new Magazine: well supported. I have laid lines right and left: engaged to do a 1 vol. story within a certain term: and in short spread traps for money everywhere. . . .—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, DORKING, *August* 29, 1864.

MY DEAR FRED,—I write with my beloved beside me; my thrice darling—of my body, my soul, my song! I have never loved a woman and felt love grow in me. This clear and lovely nature doubles mine. And she has humour, my friend. She is a charming companion, as well as the staunchest heart and fairest mistress. You will not fail us on our marriage day!—A goodly host of

friends will be here. Janet and Sir Alec come—and Oh! I would that the day were over. . . . Will it be possible to get a cottage near the New Forest, or in it? or near Ploverfield, for two weeks, until my friend's house is open to us? I shall come to you in about a week on my way to Normandy, to fetch hither Marie's married sister, who wishes to be present on the great occasion. You will see the three together, and what charming creatures they are. I am quite fixed in this place, and all are kind. The old man is changed, and makes the best of the bad business for him. He proposes to buy Copsham, or any likely spot, and build a house there for us, with a portion of the money he settles on Marie. Meantime we take a furnished house for six months, in or near Kingston. You and your wife, my friend, will visit us. I know that your wife will find a large-hearted friend in mine. You, too, will find that your friend is another man. I think my work must prosper under such noble influence.—'Vittoria' does not proceed fast, but the matter is of a good sort. I've half a mind to bring you half a dozen chapters to read to you. My Marie copies them regularly.—There's a chance of my getting an under Editorship of a new Review: a fellow who is merely to be titular chief, acting as head. I presume I shall be paid well. It is decided in a couple of months. More when we meet, on this subject. I fancy it may be a good thing.

When I come to you I must expend a day at Lyndhurst in search for the furnished cottage, but, could you meantime make inquiries? I wish it to be tolerably near Ploverfield.—How of your health? You are silent upon that. Were I with you a week I would bring you into a better state. Now that I am no longer fretted, and running twice a day between Mickleham and Copsham, I begin to feel my strength again.—Marie says at

my elbow—'The worst of being at Ploverfield is that Captain Maxse and his wife will be away when we are there.' This is not to be always the case. Adieu. My kind regards (we must sit together and invent new phrases) to Mrs. Maxse. Write, saying whether you can receive me next week—Friday week?—Your loving

George M.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

Sept. 20, 1864.

My dear Jessopp,—As to the Poems: I don't think the age prosaic for not buying them. A man who hopes to be popular, must think from the mass, and as the heart of the mass. If he follows out vagaries of his own brain, he cannot hope for general esteem; and he does smaller work. 'Modern Love' as a dissection of the sentimental passion of these days, could only be apprehended by the few who would read it many times. I have not looked for it to succeed. Why did I write it?—Who can account for pressure? . . .

Between realism and idealism there is no natural conflict. This completes that. Realism is the basis of good composition: it implies study, observation, artistic power, and (in those who can do more) humility. Little writers should be realistic. They would then at least do solid work. They afflict the world because they will attempt that it is given to none but noble workmen to achieve. A great genius must necessarily employ ideal means, for a vast conception cannot be placed bodily before the eye, and remains to be suggested. Idealism is as an atmosphere whose effects of grandeur are wrought out through a series of illusions, that are illusions to the sense within us only when divorced from the groundwork of the real. Need there be exclusion, the one of the other? The artist is incomplete who does this. Men

to whom I bow my head (Shakespeare, Goethe; and in their way, Molière, Cervantes) are Realists au fond. But they have the broad arms of Idealism at command. They give us Earth; but it is earth with an atmosphere. One may find as much amusement in a Kaleidoscope as in a merely idealistic writer: and, just as sound prose is of more worth than pretentious poetry, I hold the man who gives a plain wall of fact higher in esteem than one who is constantly shuffling the clouds and dealing with airy, delicate sentimentalities, headless and tailless imaginings, despising our good, plain strength.

Does not all science (the mammoth balloon, to wit) tell us that when we forsake earth, we reach up to a frosty, inimical Inane? For my part I love and cling to earth, as the one piece of God's handiwork which we possess. I admit that we can refashion; but of earth must be the material.—Yours faithful, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Miss M'Hinch.

SOUTHAMPTON, 1864.

MY DEAR BRIDESMAID No. 1,—I am quite well. Are you quite well? We are quite well.—The conjugation being thus concluded, I proceed to tell you that we have set our hearts (strike out the 's') upon your coming down here. Not that we are in need of even you, but we want to show you a picture of perfect felicity, and think it will do you good. Perhaps we may not mind talking to you, but we do not promise that we shall. Now, you good friend of my beloved, understand me clearly that we both wish to see you very much, and to have you with us when we are at Ploverfield, for the reason that you are dear to us in the first place, and in the second that we think we can amuse you here and give you pleasant yachting. We go to Ploverfield the first week next

month. It will be a shame to take you from your Aunt. I must confess I should do so without compunction. Having taken Marie, I am capable of anything; and if I could discern a really deserving fellow—but Mrs. Smith need not fear: they are not too numerous and we have none at hand. We are on the point of going for a sail. Marie is at work terminating her letter opposite to me. She says that she is happy, and I believe the woman. Whither has the philosopher in me fled? Possibly you may have keener eyes. Come and use them. You see, I am not afraid of you. Do persuade Mrs. Smith to part with you for a short term. I promise to take every care of my Bridesmaid. I beg you to present my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Smith and to kiss Evelyn for me mightily. Marie shall repay you for the outlay.—I am your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

PLOVERFIELD, BURSLEDON,
SOUTHAMPTON, *Oct.* 12, 1864.

MY DEAR LORD ABBOT,—I am working mightily. Last night I awoke, and at 3 o'clock struck a light and wrote a poem on Cleopatra for the 'Cornhill,' to suit Sandys's illustration. Also an 'Ode' to the Napiers (part of it) and part of 'The Ex-champion's Lament.' I say, Young Copperfield! I never had such a fit on me since the age of 21; and my good love, waking too, joyfully assisted by lending notepaper and soothing me for having disturbed her slumber.

The air here, the views from the house and proximity to still water make the place glorious: and the house is comfortable as could be desired. Here would I fix, were it possible! Write, most venerable Father! I really

trust to have a 1 vol. novel for January, ripe and ready. 'Rhoda Fleming, a Plain Story.'—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

PLOVERFIELD, BURSLEDON,
SOUTHAMPTON, *Oct.* 24, 1864.

MY DEAR LORD ABBOT,—You frisk not in your letters to me. I pay you due respect, but an you continue this tone of formality, by God, I will unfrock you! Know that Marie is the wife of a Pantagruel; she is sublime in laughter. We sit on a humourous Olympus, and rule over the follies of mortals. . . . Your letters are seen, forsooth! Your letters, oh my father, are reverently handled. . . . Life here is jolly. I rise, bathe, run, and come blooming to breakfast, having tied up Sam the vagabond dog, who breaks Maxse's heart, who in return does his best to break Sam's back. I treat the dog differently, and being a Celt myself, the Irishman comprehends, and loves me, and won't leave me. To-day we went out fishing in the boat, and Sam would follow, swimming a mile.

The house is most pleasant. We cannot accustom ourselves to anything smaller. And yet, Tuck, tell me of Thames Cottage, for I haven't heard from the faithless Dame Douglas, who swore she would write, and send agreement. . . . 'Rhoda Fleming' is a right excellent story. If I compress it into one volume I shall bring it back complete. In any case it will be out in the winter. . . . I shall rejoice to see the Hall. But, my father, in your future letters, date them from the Refectory, as of yore. I give myself seven years, and then, an I be not a pallid ghost, I will fix here my abode. By the Nine Gods! Fancy a salt river, crystal clear, winding under full-bosomed woods, to a Clovelly-like village, house

upon house, with ships, and trawlers, and yachts moored under the windows, and away the flat stream, shining to the Southern sun till it reaches Southampton Water, with the New Forest over it, shadowy, and beyond to the left, the Solent and the Island.

This is possible from our window.

The air makes athletes. All round are rolling woods, or healthy hills. The Roads are hard: but one can't have everything. I am a man of Bursledon, mark you. Adieu! I must to work. The clock 's on 12. I fondle Rhoda for an hour and then retire. Out with the lights! Tell me much news. We like to know that the world lives. There 's trouble ahead: a cook, I cry! If Nature really abhors a vacuum, she 'll come. Once more Adieu.

Your loving GEORGE M.

To Mrs. Anne Waugh.

PLOVERFIELD, *Oct.* 1864.

MY DEAR MRS. WAUGH,—I don't forget the good heart you showed us during our days of trouble and uncertainty. Here is Marie writing to you, and I rise up spontaneously to speak for myself and tell you how happy I am, and what a capital wife I have got. I like the women who discerned her when yet undiscovered because I know that such women must be attracted by common sense, simple goodness of heart, and similar if noble qualities, dear to me as well. So I take a blunt way of complimenting you, do you see? We should be glad to hear from you tidings of the student Frank; and are indeed glad to hear from the valley. You heard that the wedding passed like smooth music? And I had to make a speech, owing to the man who carried my hat:—the wretch had basely strung together some neat little illustrations wherewith to return thanks for the bridesmaids. He

couldn't give them up, and I was compelled to stand before all and make the perfect sacrifice of myself. The whole business now presents itself to me as if I had been blown through a tube and landed in Matrimony by Pneumatic Despatch.—I am, my dear Mrs. Waugh, your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

PLOVERFIELD, BURSLEDON,
SOUTHAMPTON, *Oct.* 1864.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—Now, on the last evening of my stay here, I write to you, having been intending the thing from the day of my arrival. The truth is, I write little to you because I love you so well: which is a paradox on the surface only. When I think of writing my bosom swells to its fullest, and I shrink in dismay from the thought of emptying it, I that write for money, money, money!—Do you see that? I grasp the pen frenziedly now: more I fear from a feeling of duty, or because I 'm ashamed not to have written. We return to Mickleham to-morrow. To Esher in about a week. Marie is a capital wife, and my little man will now have a mother.—I say! Do you know that you have made an impression on Miss Vulliamy? It 's too true. As a consequence, she will not, I think, write the review of your vol. of Sermons, as she once promised. I will press it. But why are you handsome? and why is your manner charming?—Thus the women pronounce: and I 'm dreading that it will go against the plan I had of getting Miss V. to do the Review. 'She would not dare.' O Rev. Apollo! to these things should'st thou look: nor frizz the lock, nor modulate the tones. For if you carry about the battery it is useless to plead that you shot not, neither did you aim.

Forgues, in the 'Revue des deux Mondes,' is translating 'Emilia.'

A publisher with whom I have an appointment this week proposes to give me four figures (with no dot between) for a novel. Am I rising? The market speaks!

I have, during the last month of my stay here, written 250 pages of 'A plain Story' of 600 pages (2 vols.). 'Vittoria' lags: but will be good, I see. I have had to resist awful temptation in the matter of verse: and succumbed once or twice. Smith (of the 'Cornhill') while 'personally admiring "Martin's Puzzle," is compelled to say he thinks it would offend many of his readers, and must therefore beg to, etc.' The 'Cleopatra' to Sandys's illustration is done. 'Lines' merely! Not of much value, but containing fire as well as wind.—When shall we meet?—I shall be a MILLIONAIRE next year. My 'plain story' is first to right me and then the 3 volumer will play trumpets. Write to me—perhaps the Garrick Club is the best address for two or three weeks about Wednesday and Friday time. Give my love to your wife, whose dear hearty face I long to see. Will you, will you, will you come to us at Christmas?—Adieu. Here I am, and could go on now almost to the verge of the soup, beyond the dinner bell.

Take my heart and my name at the bottom of it.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Miss J—— H——.

193 PICCADILLY, LONDON, W., *Nov.* 22, 1864.

The chief fault in your stories is the redundancy of words which overlays them; and the chief hope visible in them is the copious youthful feeling running throughout. Your characters do not speak the language of nature, and this is specially to be charged against them

when they are under strong excitement and should most do so. Nor are the characters very originally conceived, though there is good matter in the Old Welshman C. Rees. Your defect at present lies in your raw feeling. Time will cure this, if you will get the habit of looking resolutely at the thing you would pourtray, instead of exclaiming about it and repeating yourself without assisting the reader on in any degree. We certainly think that you are a hopeful writer, and possibly we have been enough outspoken to encourage you to believe us sincere in saying so.

To Miss J—— H——.

193 Piccadilly, London, W.

Madam,—You speak of the exclamatory style as being, you think, essentially and naturally feminine. If you will look at the works of the writer of 'Adam Bede,' you will see that she, the greatest of female writers, manifests nothing of the sort. It is simply a quality of youth, and you by undertaking to study will soon tame your style. Interjections are commonly a sign of raw thought, and of vagrant emotion :—a literary hysteria to which women may be more subject than men ; but they can talk in another tongue, let us hope. We are anxious that you should not be chagrined by any remarks that we have made. There is real promise in your work : but remember that the best fiction is fruit of a well-trained mind. If hard study should kill your creative effort, it will be no loss to the world or to you. And if, on the contrary, the genius you possess should survive the process of mental labour, it will be enriched and worthy of a good rank. But do not be discouraged by what we say ; and do not listen to the encomiums of friends. Read the English of the Essayists ; read de Stendhal (Henri Beyle)

in French; Heinrich Zschokke in German (minor tales). Learn to destroy your literary offspring remorselessly until you produce one that satisfies your artistic feeling.

To William Hardman.

MICKLEHAM, *Dec.* 18, 1864.

BELOVED TUCK,—The Christmas season causes that contemplation should make you specially its object. Marie went in the afternoon for a second edition of the Reverend B—— . . . I aloft, to Mickleham Downs, where the great herded yews stand on a pure snowfield. I thought to have fallen on the very throne of Silence. In a few paces I became a Druid. Time withered from the ends and all his late writings were smudged out, till I lived but in the earlier days of Britain, when he with difficulty made his mark. It was a sublime scene, that long roll of the unfooted snow, with the funeral black plumes of the yews spreading in a dumb air, as if all had ceased, or nothing was begun. Embraced by it, my spirit conjured up a passionate desire to snowball Tuck, till he cried himself a sinner. I moaned that the man was not there, that I might snowball him, till fainting he dropped to earth.

Eh! What a change of the course of our fortunes, Tuck! I am married, and thou Lord of Norbiton, and all these things were dreamed not a year back. Wherefore must I think truly there is a Spirit and a peculiar Spirit, to the new year, and I greet you and wish well to you and yours (who also are mine) in the year to come.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

GARRICK CLUB, *Autumn* 1864 (?).

MY DEAR JESSOPP,— . . . The 'Fine Arts' and 'Laurence Sterne' await you, just unpacked. Classical

books have no chance with Chapman & Hall—and Oh, the Catullus! Which is in another box, and which I want to put my hand to before you print it.

. . . Have you heard that the Countess Guiccioli has two continuation cantos of Don Juan, and means to publish them? Likewise more of Byron!—He 's abused, so I take to him; and I 'm a little sick of Tennysonian green Tea. I don't think Byron wholesome—exactly, but a drop or so—Eh? And he doesn't give limp, lackadaisical fishermen, and pander to the depraved sentimentalism of our drawing-rooms. I tell you that 'Enoch Arden' is ill done, and that in twenty years' time it will be denounced as villanous weak, in spite of the fine (but too conscious) verse, and the rich insertions of tropical scenery. Now, then!—are we face to face, foot to foot?—Forgues is translating 'Emilia' (somewhat condensed) very well in the 'Revue des deux Mondes.' . . .

To Captain Maxse.

Garrick Club, *Jan.* 14, 1865.

My dear Fred,— . . . It was my intention to write the Verses at Ploverfield. I will write and send them —that is, if you agree with my view.

Verses, because they fix a child's memory and remain with him, and become a part of his child's understanding of reverence, perforce of the music, and necessitate simplicity of expression.

I hold to the word 'Father.' No young child can take the meaning of 'Spirit.' You must give him a concrete form, or he will not put an idea in what he is uttering. He must address some body. Later, when he throws off his childishness, he will, if you are watching and assisting him, learn to see that he has prayed to no

false impersonation in addressing an invisible 'Father.' If you do otherwise than this you are in danger (as I think) of feeding his mouth with empty words.

Of Creed not a syllable.

Now let me ask you for a piece of advice. Marie and I, following your example, are abjuring (we follow it tentatively) alcoholic liquor. We find the water dreadfully cold, though one pledges Purcell! and the other Fred! We suppose that we shall get used to it, as you and your Water-God have done. But now our water-pipes are frozen. We have nothing to drink. Please what are we to do? Answer before we choke.—Ever your loving

George Meredith.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

The Cedars, *Jan.* 30, *night*, 1865.

No, my dear Jessopp: for this there is no necessity. But, hear! the man went and got married: it was well for him: he bought linen, he bought plate, disbursed early and eke late: the fat end of his purse did set flowing towards his fireside, and the lean was to them that did accredit him. So. And meantime, in prospect of the needful, he put aside 'Vittoria' (which contains points of grandeur and epical interest) to 'finish off' Rhoda Fleming in one volume, now swollen to two—and Oh, will it be three?—But this is my D^d. D^d. D^d. uncertain workmanship. You see, I am three days in town, and I am hustled with moving and can't get my shoulders into a place, but the toe of Fate takes me somewhat lower and away I go; and this is not favourable to composition, though my dear wife does all that she can for me, and would hush the elements, bidding them know me pen in hand. However, I hope in six weeks to be clear of Miss Rhoda, into whose history I have put more

work than she deserves. I wrote in saddest spirits, rare with me. Stomach, my friend. I am not in the bracing air which befits me. But, in future I will be punctual. By degrees I will reduce the portentous O. U.'s. And I thank you with all my heart for the friendly peace-breathing letter. It 's precious balm to read.—'Vittoria' is one third towards completion. Did you see the translation of 'Emilia,' by Forgues, condensed, in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes'? He has apparently taken to me; he sent for Rd. Feverel to review. A New Edition of 'Shagpat,' with an illustration to 'Bhanavar' by Sandys, comes out in a month.—Marie has, I believe, written fully anent the Son. We mourn and howl over him—When are we four to meet again? You see, there is a new witch now, and she 's a darling.—Adieu, for a space!—I am your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

April 19, 1865.

DEAR SIR,—Am I to be damned to all eternity because I curse at a vile organ now afflicting me with the tune of Jack Robinson, presently to be followed by the 100th Psalm, and the simulation of the groans of a sinner.

Perhaps you will put this before your reverend friend. But are you not to be damned in the present for permitting the infliction, and not at least commanding a fresh importation of organs into Kingston, and the exit of the old.

This is a matter for you to reflect upon.—I am, dear sir, even as a Chestnut on the Hob, your bursting

AUTHOR.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON, 1865.

MY DEAR FRED,—Great thanks for the game decorating our larder.—Miss Longworth[1] has something to complain of, and I think Dr. Hunter[2] an effronté Yankee. But surely you admit that British Juries are commonly sentimental to an infinite degree in favour of the protesting female? The late verdicts are merely a reaction.—I must tell you that I am becoming an admirer of President Johnson. And have you seen the Book called Sherman's great March? If you get it, examine the heads of his Generals. They are of a peculiarly fine cast and show the qualities of energy and skill, and also race. They are by no means vulgar. Place our best men (headed by the Duke of Cam) alongside them, and start. The contrast will not be flattering to us.—Hawthorne has just the pen to fascinate you. His deliberate analysis, his undramatic representations, the sentience rather than the drawings which he gives you of his characters, and the luscious, morbid tone, are all effective. But I think his delineations untrue: their power lies in the intensity of his egotistical perceptions, and are not the perfect view of men and women.—Goethe's elective Affinities—the

[1] Maria Theresa Longworth (?1832-1881), authoress, and plaintiff in the Yelverton case. In the summer of 1852 she was introduced to William Charles Yelverton, afterwards Viscount Avonmore. In 1855 she accepted his proposal of marriage, and though the engagement was for a time suspended, on April 12, 1857 Yelverton read aloud the Anglican marriage service at Miss Longworth's lodgings in Edinburgh, and they were afterwards married at the Roman Catholic chapel at Rostrevor in Ireland, and lived together both in Ireland and Scotland. On June 26, 1858, Yelverton formally married the widow of Professor Edward Forbes, and on October 31, 1859 Miss Longworth sued him for restitution of conjugal rights. She failed to win her case then, and though the Irish court upheld her, the Scottish and English courts declared against her.

[2] Dr. Robert Hunter, who brought an action for libel against the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Nov. 10, 1865. He won his case: damages one farthing.

Wahlverwandtschaften—would delight you, as they have nourished Hawthorne.—I wish I were going to meet you at Lord Hardwicke's. I like my Lord.—I am very hot upon 'Vittoria.' Lewes says it must be a success; and it has my best writing. I fancy I begin in the 'Fortnightly' in February. Perhaps I have given it too historical a character to please the brooding mind of Fred. But, we shall see. I think one must almost love Italy to care for it and the heroine. There are scenes that will hold you; much adventure to entertain you; delicate bits and fiery handling. But there is no tender dissection, and the softer emotions are not kept at half gasp upon slowly-moving telescopic objects, with their hearts seen beating in their frames.—Marie thanks you warmly for the monograms, which are doubtless very pretty jugglery and show how one M can stand on the head of another and have W interlacing his legs—like a basketful of lampreys.—Give my love to the boys and make Freddy remember me. I kiss your Cecilia's fingers, and am ever your loving friend, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, 1865.

MY DEAR FRED,—It will annoy and astound you to hear that I consider Bixio brave and constant, though I question whether much is gained by any individual action before there is cause for general discontent. Merely to deny, is not to show a love for truth. It shows fanaticism—which is evidently what delights you so much. The fanatical worship of truth will always be fruitless: it is nothing better than the embracing of a phantom. For, what is Truth? Bixio could state nothing. He fires a sounding shot while there is peace, and against a superstition which, in the present day,

rather averts intolerance than invokes it. What I venture to say is, Live on and be placable under some trifling irritation, till men are near a majority (or nearer to one) in contempt of imposture; or till the apprehension of priests prompt them to commence their old game. At that hour is time enough for us to think of action. A tyro in conspiracy will tell you that these isolated protests never exist. Some (miserable philosophers) have said that they owe their origin to vanity. I am not quite of that opinion. It is worthy of your school to rush at once on a presumption that, as I differ from you, I must be a time-server. The Faggot-and-Torture priests said likewise—'If not for, against us.' You appear to me to want to raise up an extreme party that shall rouse the other party to extremes, and so do battle-fight for a shade; gain what Time would have given you without waste of blood, temper, and divine meditation. Between you Philosophy would have no home on our planet. You presume moreover to declare yourself as if, perceiving a system to be faulty, it was an imperative duty to explode every shred of it to the winds. You must bear in mind that Christianity will always be one of the great chapters in the History of Humanity: that it fought down brutishness: that it has been the mother of our civilization: that it is tender to the poor, maternal to the suffering, and has supplied for most, still supplies for many, nourishment that in a certain state of the intelligence is instinctively demanded. St. Bernard checked Abelard, it is true. But he also stood against the French Barons, rebuked and controlled them. The Church was then a Light. Since it did such a service to men, men I think should not stand out against it without provocation.—You speak, my dear Fred, of 'the deepest questions of life.' They are to be thought over very long and very carefully before they are fought over. I

cannot think that men's minds are strong enough, or their sense of virtue secure, to escape from the tutelage of superstition in one form or another, just yet. From the Pagan divinity to the Christian, I see an advanced conception, and the nearer we get to a general belief in the abstract Deity—i.e. the more and more abstract, the nearer are men to a comprehension of the principles (morality, virtue, etc.) than which we require nothing further to govern us.—I write expecting dinner bell.—As regards Hawthorne, little Meredith admits that your strokes have truth. I strive by study of humanity to represent it: not its morbid action. I have a tendency to do that, which I repress: for, in delineating it, there is no gain. In all my, truly, very faulty works, there is this aim. Much of my strength lies in painting morbid emotion and exceptional positions; but my conscience will not let me so waste my time. Hitherto consequently I have done nothing of mark. But I shall, and 'Vittoria' will be the first indication (if not fruit) of it. My love is for epical subjects—not for cobwebs in a putrid corner; though I know the fascination of unravelling them. 'Vittoria' begins in the 'Fortnightly' on February 1st, if not Jany. 15th.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON, *Friday*, 1865.

MY DEAR FRED,—I look over your recent letters (your pertinacious defence of your untenable position and ingenuous affectation of a triumph being amusing to me) and find questions I have not answered.

A man named Greenwood, newly eltd. to the Garrick, is the Editor of 'Pall Mall.'—The 'bar of Michael Angelo'[1] has puzzled hundreds. I can't attempt to explain it.

[1] Cf. *In Memoriam.*

I have been foolish enough to think that it must mean a peculiar girder-like hanging brow that one sees on Buonarotti's face. Great poets attain a superior lustre by these obscurities. If I had written such a line, what vehement reprobation of me from Ploverfield! what cunning efforts to construe! and finally what a lecture on my wilfulness! In Tennyson it is interesting. In Browning you are accustomed to gnaw a bone and would be surprised to find him simple. But G. M. who is not known, not acknowledged, he shall be trounced if he offers us a difficulty—we insist upon his thinking in our style. Very well, Fred. I am used to it.—No, I hate the black East, and I don't like the frost; I like nothing in Kingston. But I envy you the fine S. W. now showing soft white and blue, and taking you in its arms. Adieu; mark two or three points (a few will serve) in my advice to you from time to time, and note and communicate your sensations when at last you appreciate and adopt them—for scientific purposes; not for my satisfaction at all.—Ever your friend, GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

1865.

In re Bixio.[1]

DEAREST FRED,—There is no such thing as a sum

[1] Girolamo Nino Bixio, born at Chiavari near Genoa in 1821. He enlisted in the Sardinian marine service soon after 1835, and remained in it till 1846. In 1848 he shared in the revolutionary excitement, enrolled himself as a volunteer, and took part in the defence of Vicenza and of Venice. In the following year he was severely wounded in the defence of Rome. After rendering other services under Garibaldi to the cause of Italian Liberation, he took command of the vessels in the expedition of 1860, and at Marsala led one of the battalions of volunteers. He was the second of 'the Thousand.' He held chief command in the battle on the Volturno, and there defeated the Neapolitan troops in their attempt to surround Garibaldi. At the close of the war he entered the Italian army. He died in 1873 in the East Indies.

of successive protests in favour of Truth, when those protests are not directed by wisdom. Will bawlings in the street avail, save to disturb and annoy the lieges? They irritate the slumbering dominant party, without strengthening the insurgent. What is being done in the 'Fortnightly,' for instance, and elsewhere, is efficacious, and does strengthen, while it increases, the silent band. Let Philosophy sap the structure and work its way. What we have to anticipate is this: There is, and will further be, a falling off of the educated young men in seeking an establishment as Churchmen. These are highly educated, and in their nature tolerant. They are beginning to think for themselves, and they give their lives to other matters. The Church will have to be recruited from a lower, a more illiterate, necessarily a more intolerant class. These will find themselves at variance with their intellectual superiors, and in self-defence will attempt to wield the Dogma and knock us down with a club. In about twenty years' time we may expect a conflict to come. If in the meantime we alarm such placid fellows as we see in the clerical robes, we are really doing Truth no service. Objectless (that is, indistinct, blind) protests, are like all unseasonable things, useless, and are shelved as mother nature shovels away the dust which does not serve her. Let Bixio do as pleases him; I don't complain; I say, that he is not an example—except for a constitutional rebel, and he is a curiosity, and will never get followers.

In reading Carlyle, bear in mind that he is a humourist. The insolence offensive to you, is part of his humour. He means what he says, but only as far as a humourist can mean what he says. See the difference between him and Emerson, who is on the contrary a philosopher. The humourist, notwithstanding, has much truth to back him. Swim on his pages, take his poetry and fine

grisly laughter, his manliness, together with some splendid teaching. It is a good set-off to the doctrines of what is called the 'Empirical school.' I don't agree with Carlyle a bit, but I do enjoy him.

You should read Lewes's article on Comte in the 'Fortnightly' before this:—also Harrison's on 'Co-operative labour.'

Tell me what you think of 'Vittoria.' Lewes is enamoured of her. I know the workmanship is good. Further I am unable to judge.

As regards Gilmore's house, I should like to take it. But I have determined to save up and put by, and endure this place (if possible) for the three years' term. And when I move I will move to a fixed place. Rich men may be houseless rovers: it upsets poor ones. Besides, wives don't like foreign houses and won't let their hearts' fibres cling to any place not their own—don't you know that?

Willie Maxse is the sweetest blooming little man in all the world—(Yes, Mrs. Fred, in all the world!). His ready smile is lovely. He develops splendidly, and on mere mother's milk. Yet, though he is flourishing so well and acts like clockwork, we have a throng of people saying, 'Oh! he must be fed by hand as well: no mother can stand it, no child can thrive, etc.'; and their own children, thus according to their system, bottle and biscuit fed, wheeze and cough and wake of nights and have convulsions—God knows what. With such parents we may expect fools at least in the next generation.

I trust the two dear lads will go on well. Salute Freddy from me.—Your affectionate GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

GARRICK CLUB, 1865.

MY DEAREST FRED,—Let him be your lay godson. As regards the ceremony, it is a piece of the old secondary

barbaric system of teaching men to be humane; and is of the same class as Freemasonry, in which you bind yourself to help a man, because he knows how to press your knuckles in a particular manner. I can't bear asking men to do this; but I do wish the boy to have some little link with you, such as your name will give him.

We differ in our spirit of objection to the dominant creed: but I suppose that twenty years hence we shall not differ. When the Ministers of Religion press on for an open rupture by attempts at persecution, it will be time to take rank under colours: until when I hold myself in reserve. I don't want the day to be advanced. I think you altogether too impetuous: 500 years too fast for the human race: I think that where the Christian Ministers are guilty of little more than boredom, you have got them in a state of perfection, and at least owe them your tolerance for theirs:—And so I shall continue to think until next I go to Church. Adieu.

To G. H. Lewes.[1]

KINGSTON LODGE, *Dec.* 9, 1865.

MY DEAR LEWES,—I shall be glad to make over to you the use of the copyright of my novel 'Vittoria' for issue in the 'Fortnightly Review,' in consideration of the sum of £250: all subsequent rights to the use of it being reserved by myself. Your saying 'write to me' did not seem to imply 'write immediately or there will be no contract.' In fact, I supposed you were careless about any stipulation until more of my work had been submitted to you. I am hard at it, and as carefully as possible. Pardon me, if my apparent negligence shall have put you out. I thank you very much for your fore-

[1] The friend of George Eliot; then editing the *Fortnightly Review*.

going letter, which quite solves my difficulty, and settles the matter justly.—If my progress seems to you slow, remember that I am on foreign ground and have to walk warily. I read a good deal of the novel to Mdme. Venturi the other day, who says that the Italian colouring is correct.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON LODGE,
KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, S.W., *Jan.* 8, 1866.

MY DEAR FRED,—We have returned, and if this S.W. holds, I shall rejoice to see Ploverfield on Saturday. But if it freezes again? Well, you shall write and command. I want to come.—I certainly think that prayer is good for children. It is good even after the period when blind reverence ceases to be fruitful—it is good for men. It is at once an acknowledgment of some higher power: it rouses up and cleanses the nature, and searches us through to find what we are. Only, the praying for gifts, and thanking for gifts, is really damnable. It 's like treating the Lord as an old uncle. A child should pray in verse—don't you think so? I have thought of trying to write a morning and evening song for Freddy. Say if you care to have them. Arthur used to repeat some lines.

Oh! I quite acknowledge that I am conquered by you. But then, I never attempted to get the better of you. The more you flourish the prouder I am of my work, and if you prefer to give your gratitude in due form to a medical man, I don't complain; you choose the least humiliating alternative, as you may think. There was a report in London yesterday that you had given up Meat. I hope this is not true, though I know I used to tell you that we consume too much meat, and you (I remember) appeared to reflect on my words. The deter-

mination which you hinted, that you would by and by abstain from clothing yourself, will not I trust be carried into effect. It would please none but Monboddo's ghost. I have in fact said that we wear too much clothing—still, Fred, it is surely an excess to forswear a single garment, and rely upon hair to cover your body, as you look to impudence to protect your shivering arguments!

I long intensely to see you and walk with you: and I shall correct you very gently. Don't forget that mental arrogance is as a fiery wine to the spirit—a little of it gives a proper pride: but you carry too much. Adieu. I bow to your Cecilia, and am your loving GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON LODGE, *April 25, midnight,* 1866.

MY DEAREST FRED,— . . . The article on the 'Travailleurs de la Mer' is Morley's; I think it scarcely does justice to the miraculous descriptive power. The Storm is amazing: I have never read anything like it. It is next to Nature in force and vividness. Hugo rolls the sea and sweeps the heavens; the elements are in his hands. He is the largest son of his mother earth in this time present. Magnificent in conception, unsurpassed—leagues beyond us all—in execution. Not (nur Schade!) a philosopher. There 's the pity. With a philosophic brain, as well as his marvellous poetic energy, he would stand in the front rank of glorious men forever.

His occasionally dirty speech is just a part of his grotesque greatness. It costs me nothing to overlook it—especially in this age of satin.

Fryston is the dullest house with the dryest company in the dismallest country I have ever visited. Houghton, of course, was pleasant, but I think I could never travel two miles to go there again.

. . . Have the articles in the 'Pall Mall G.' on coal and England's prosperity made you a trifle uncomfortable ?

Gladstone's behaviour has been wretched.

Doubtless a combative Berkeley would have supported him in spite of conscience. I can hear you making a short speech in condemnation of the Government while you promise to record your vote in its favour. Next to fighting the world, fighting oneself is the prime luxury; and to put yourself in such a position that you will have to do the latter, because you have done the former, is genius. It must be an intense grief to you to be out of Parliament now.—I take no interest in Reform. I see no desire for it below. If there were, I would give it; I have no fear of Radicals. Democracy must come, and the sooner it overflows rulers who are cowardly, the better for all. We say—Democracy, as if it were some deadly evil; whereas it is almost synonymous with Change. Democracy never rests. The worst of it is that it can be violent in its motion. To you, who prefer the Allopathic system of medicine, it will come as a natural matter. Good-night, dear Friend. Write to me, and often.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, *June* 8, 1866.

MY DEAR FRED,—Don't think I desert you. The truth is, that to write politics satisfactorily, one must give up one's time to the study of politics—one must be in the thick of the fight. And only in such cases can you exact from Editors a proper respect for you. You must prove that your political opinions are worth having in type, or be so useful to them that they can't refuse to insert them. Now Greenwood, and doubtless our B.

as well, don't regard me as a political writer, so I am always in danger of slipping into the waste-paper basket, unless I write review or essay. They rely on a sufficient number of handy men to supply the wants of their journals. And the truth is, I can only now and then afford time to write an experimental article on politics. When my last debts are paid, and I have finished my next novel, I shall have a free hand. I 'm sure you don't suppose that I willingly abandon you to your fight. I could have no wish but to stick by you, and the more so as your views are mine.

Moreover, Editors object to articles upon subjects which are not immediately prominent. I tried the 'Pall Mall' with your pamphlet, but Greenwood was indifferent in tone. The subject will revive speedily, but the moment it lay down it was temporarily dead for Editors.—I have not meant to say I will not write unless I see my pay—but that it 's heart-breaking to feel that I have given up my time, with some amount of ardour in a theme, all to no purpose save to see my manuscript as the froth tossed up from the wheel of an Editorial mill.—But surely, even though you should feel some disappointment with me, you accuse my circumstances more than me.—Adieu. Your sketch of the Grebe [1] flying to Havre drives me mad. I hope Mrs. Fred will enjoy the week at Ascot and have the long, blooming holiday thoroughly due to her.—Your loving

George Meredith.

To Miss J—— H——

193 Piccadilly,
London, W., *June* 15, 1866.

The Reader of Miss J—— H——'s tale of 'Anwyl Anwyl' presents his compliments to her, feeling pro-

[1] Captain Maxse's cutter yacht.

foundly guilty—for the blame of this long delay rests entirely upon him. He put the MS. aside, after he had read it; his intention was to write a long chapter on what to write, blot and avoid. He can say in personal extenuation that Miss H—— could not possibly have made any 'commercial' use of the tale; and that if she had published it, it would have done harm to her reputation.

The Reader is in town on Thursday next, and, if it shall please Miss H—— to listen to a few of his critical objections to her style, perhaps he may be enabled to do her more good in that direction than if he attempted to write them down. Therefore, should she be willing to call at 193 Piccadilly on Thursday at four P.M., he will endeavour penitently to repair his shameful behaviour. The truth is, he did nothing at all, because of his having intended to do so much.

If Miss H—— should prefer to avoid vocal criticism it shall be written down, but it will possibly not be so effective, and it may seem more severe.

In making this proposal, the Reader has taken an unusual course by which he trusts to be able to show his desire to expiate his previous carelessness. It needs hardly to be said that obscurity is his most comfortable cloak, whenever he undertakes the thankless duty of looking at a MS.

In June 1866 Meredith went, on behalf of the *Morning Post*, to the seat of war in Italy. On June 22 he was at Ferrara with Cialdini's army corps—at Cremona on the 30th—at Bozzolo, the headquarters of the eleventh division of the Italian army, on July 3—at the headquarters of the army on July 7 at Torre Malumberti—thence he moved to the new headquarters at Piadena and on to Treviso. He left Italy and reached Marseilles, after a voyage of thirty-six hours, on July 24. He returned to Italy in the following

month. (See *Correspondence from the Seat of War in Italy*. Memorial Edition and *Édition de Luxe* of the works of George Meredith.)

To Tom Taylor.[1]

MILAN, *Sept.* 10, 1866.

MY DEAREST TOM,—Bird had left for Ischl when your letter reached me in Vienna. I write in case you should see Mowbray Morris and have favourable news to communicate to say that my address will be for the next six weeks: 'aux soins de M. Theodore Vulliamy, à Nonancourt (Eure), France.'

I came over the Semmering to Venice, remained there three days and worked my way through Padua and Vicenza hitherwards, where from the upper windows of the Hotel Cavour I see the White Alps. Italy is where I would live if I had the choice. Here I am so happy that I only want my wife and little ones with me to wish for nothing further. In all probability I shall be back in Venice for the fêtes, if the delay is not great. The Mg. Post should have an account of them. Perhaps Borthwick will insist on my doing the work, and I shall not be sorry; for what a correspondent wants is something to describe, and not to continue writing about nothing.

Do you remember the Carpaccios in Venice? Surely justice is not done to his extraordinary sweetness and richness. If I did not love Giorgione and Titian so much, I should rank him my favourite. His faces are as sweet as Fra Angelico's, with variety and humanity superadded. The Baptism of Christ in the Church of San Lorenzo, Vicenza, by Giov. Bellini is the only Christian head of

[1] Tom Taylor (T. T. of Meredith's 'To a Friend Lost'), editor of *Punch*, who wrote the famous lines on the death of Lincoln (April 14, 1865), 'You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,' for which he received the thanks of Congress.

the Saviour that I have ever seen. I dare say you know it. Curious to see the ebbing of the Austrians out of all this district! I have sent the 'Post' some letters, but I must reduce my impressions to an article.

I hope very much that the 'Times' will take me on. In a settled position (I wish it were in Italy), and with command of news, or the sources of it, I believe I should show the requisite judgment. Adieu, my dear Tom. If there is anything I can do for you in North Italy, write immediately to the 'Hotel Cavour, Milan.' If you won't like 'Vittoria' (pure obstinacy or base siding with the majority) I promise you quite another sort of next novel. Kiss your little girl for me and give her a stranger's love, and God bless you all.—I am your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Algernon Charles Swinburne.

KINGSTON LODGE, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.

MY DEAR SWINBURNE,—'Vittoria,' as I am told by Chapman and others, is not liked; so you may guess what pleasure your letter has given me. For I have the feeling that if I get your praise, I hit the mark. It seems that I am never to touch the public's purse. Why will you content yourself with only writing generously? Why will you not come and see me? My wife has constantly asked me how it is that you do not come. Must I make confession to her that I have offended you? It is difficult for me to arrange for spare evenings in town; I can't leave her here alone. If we meet, I must quit you only too early. I wonder whether Sandys would invite us to dine with him; when we might have one of our evenings together, and come to an understanding about future evenings at Kingston. I will speak to him on that head.—I am very eager for the poems. The

promise of the essay on Byron makes me extremely curious, for though I don't mistrust your estimation of the manliness of his verse, he is the last man of whom I would venture to foretell your opinion.—As to the Poems—if they are not yet in the press, do be careful of getting your reputation firmly grounded: for I have heard 'low mutterings' already from the Lion of British prudery; and I, who love your verse, would play savagely with a knife among the proofs for the sake of your fame; and because I want to see you take the first place, as you may if you will.—Apropos, what do you think of Buchanan's poetry? Lewes sends him up I don't know how high. My feeling is that he is always on the strain for pathos and would be a poetic Dickens. But I can't judge him fairly, I have not read his book. Adieu. Remind Moxon of the Byron, and write to me again.—I am ever your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON ON THAMES, S.W., 1866.

MY DEAREST FRED,—I was too late for the post yesterday, but you know how such good news will have gladdened me.

Our Willie Maxse is quite charming; he is healthy and spirited, and very intelligent. You should see his face when he is laughed at. His sense of humour, with a momentary disgust at finding himself the mark for it in others, produces the most comical expression possible. Marie says she can understand some delight in welcoming a boy; but a girl! who would care for a girl!

The system by which you are correcting your troubled physical condition is, I am sure, sound. To a strong stomach occasional draughts of wine do good rather

than harm. Our fault is to eat in excess while we drink wine as well. One dish and one pint of wine, old and sound, go harmoniously, but wine should be treated as a luxury.—I agree with your practical deductions, at the same time, I note with dismay your tendency to extremes. You are right just now. Nevertheless you must needs lay down positive principles as if your existing state were the key of things. You will become a fanatical Retired Admiral advocating Maine Liquor laws for every natural appetite on earth, and dogmatically refusing to hear an opinion. I foresee it,—unless you can be humble while there 's yet time, and admit that I am right, who preach moderation, and you are wrong, who raise the banner of Abstinence with all its tissue in tatters.—I dare say you will continue to deny that it was I who gave you the good advice months—years back. And then probably when we are old men you will consent to my saying it was I who did it. Dogmatism confounded in the last crisis escapes by a quibble! How much better to take a manly, modest view of a friend's deserts:—I do congratulate you with all my heart on your prospect of recovery, which I think clear. Only, I am amused at the physiological lecture. Why, I have said as much a hundred times! But you now turn round, and with supernatural force hurl my own wisdom at me, and say, Read that! Surely the argumentative virus was never more wonderfully displayed. If the trick is old, it is at any rate uncommonly well managed: and no doubt almost unconsciously. Confess to my value in one bright instance, and even you would hardly be able to stand against me in other matters, so, to maintain your antagonism, you affect an air of total independence. Such tactics will serve you well in the House of Commons.—What do you think of Lieutenant B—— ? He seems to be the victim of a poor education and a super-

fluity of red pepper. Still, I don't like to see all the English Press down on him, for he 's a boy, and isn't it rather hard to break him for writing insolent letters to an M.P.? Wouldn't it be sufficient to degrade him in rank, as he is already in reputation?—But when our Press is unanimous, I am always against it. Our Press was unanimous in favour of Lieutenant P—— till he showed too unmistakeably as a low dog.—Borthwick starts to-day for Marseilles, thence with Sir Henry . . . to Malta, to Tunis, to Spezzia, to Rome, to Nice—et vogue les papillons!—Adieu, dear friend; I don't like to leave off talking to you.—Your ever loving

George M.

To Captain Maxse.

The Old House, Mickleham,
Dorking, *Dec.* 22, 1866.

My dear Fred,—I cannot accept the illustration of the mackerel. It is ingenious, and no more; though it may be praised for throwing a side light on the mental characteristics of the discoverer. If you had always turned sick at the smell of wine, to force you to drink any wine would be cruel and wrong. If half a mackerel were daily plumped down the throat of a man who had never in his life taken 10 ℔ of mackerel per diem, it would be monstrous to subject him to the meal. But if he has eaten much mackerel—too much—there is (supposing virtues to exist in mackerel as in wine) no harm in asking him to take a little, from time to time. I, for instance, should say to him—'The 10 ℔ a day were a poison to you; but that is no reason why the occasional half mackerel should be the same. You fancy it, because one excess begets the conception of another: you have become the victim of a kind of mental elephantiasis—you fancy all things as immen-

sities; you cannot understand the value of an intermediate measure. I warned you again and again that 10 ℔ of mackerel per diem was excessive, etc., but mackerel is nourishing. Really, Fred, I have driven you hard to make you fall back on the mackerel argument—Mackerel is poison to some, ergo, wine, which is likewise poison to some, should be similarly avoided. But I tell you that Mackerel, if hurtful to any constitution, shows itself noxious from the first and won't be taken. And if wine is really bad for you, a glass would originally have inspired you with all the wisdom you insist on having gained for yourself in contempt of your best advisers now. On the contrary, wine has never poisoned you, but a wilful resolve to take as much as you pleased of it (do you remember Cherbourg, where you would, despite an agony of protestation from me, order and drink a bottle of Burgundy at a third-rate Norman provincial hotel)—that has done the work of poisoning your health. At this festive season, my dear Fred, one reflects on your fearful relapse from clear and eminent sense, with a melancholy deeper than wrath. I know what is coming next. I have anticipated it and written it down. I will mention it another time.

What I dread most is that you are by these still degrees, as it were, boiling, or simmering, yourself down to a sort of human type, and engine. When you think you think suddenly, vehemently—with the force and swiftness of a meteor, and perhaps with the result, but in any case your apparent incapacity to listen to the wisdom thrust in your way, is fraught with incalculable evils, and more and more I feel Fred going and an eccentric Force usurping his place. I will allude to this further by and by. Do you feel for the Pope yet? The Holy Father is unfortunately situated, surely.—I am ever yours,

George M.

N.B.—I confess I have written without consideration as to whether it is kind to knock over the theories by which you assure yourself that your wildest changes of system are sound and admirable. On my honour, I am careless about gratitude, though the sight of ingratitude naturally pains.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON, *Jan.* 17, 1867.

MY DEAR FRED,—Pardon me—just one moment; you see, I turn to you from my work and give you a sheet that should have formed part of my magnum opus: ice-water is not wholesome. Farmers will not give frozen water to their cattle, and melted ice, to be drinkable, must be clean—a thing difficult to obtain. But when taken it should be, as all civilized people will tell you, partly in solution. Ice, but not ice-water, is a specific for indigestion, though one to be rarely used. Compelled to set you right!

I think that you take a philosophically false estimate of a child's intelligence and nature. He retains what he learns just as much and no more than he remains what he is. Certain mental, and physical, food is necessary for him. Beware of training him to scepticism! I can't bear to think of a boy as being educated in opposition to the opinion prevailing.—The title 'Father' really does not suggest the aspect of a man to a child's imagination, if you associate it with prayer to an Unseen One. Neither does the jingle of Nursery Rhymes destroy his sense for the pure flow of good verse. The prayer you sketch is not objectionable; but it is not enough to my mind. I will in a few days send you a version. I would not say 'God,' but 'Father of all Good.' The title 'God' is bestowed by a child (in obedience to the

inquiries he has made) on him who rolls the thunder and sends the currants that form the pudding. He may always retain this notion. I am sure your excellent Mrs. Lewis does, perhaps her estimable husband likewise. But the 'Father of all Good' soon grows to mean the utmost in the regulated mind of a child. I am afraid I can't see how a child is to pray to Jesus Christ as Man: but one may teach him to pray to be likened to him as when he walked the earth.—Ever yours, GEORGE M.

To Algernon Charles Swinburne.

KINGSTON LODGE,
KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, *March* 2, 1867.

MY DEAR SWINBURNE,—I have waited to read the Ode,[1] and also to ship off my Arthur for Switzerland. The Ode is the most nobly sustained lyric in our language, worthy of its theme. Broader, fuller verse I do not know. I had a glance at the proofs, and my chief sentiment was envy. Now I can read without that affliction. For me there will never be time given even to try the rising to such a song. I am passionately anxious to see the 'Italy'[2] and have a thousand spirits of fancy about it. Let me know when you return to town, and when you will come and pay us a visit. I need not say that my wife will be glad to see you. Has she not fought your battles? I was in Austria when the heat of the storm was raging. I returned from Italy in the winter after all was over. It would not have been my advice to you to notice the reviewers: but it's certainly better never to keep red-hot shot in store, and perhaps one broadside in reply does no harm. I wish rather that it had been

[1] 'Ode on Insurrection in Candia.'
[2] 'A Song of Italy' (1867).

done in verse. As for the hubbub, it will do you no harm, and you have partly deserved it; and it has done the critical world good by making men look boldly at the restrictions imposed upon art by our dominating damnable bourgeoisie.—'Vittoria' passes to the limbo where the rest of my works repose. You alone have hit on the episode of the Guidascarpi. I have not heard or seen another mention of it. I would have carried it into fulness, but the vast machinery pressed on me. My object was not to write the Epic of the Revolt—for that the time is yet too new: but to represent the revolt itself, with the passions animating both sides, the revival of the fervid Italian blood; and the character of the people: Luigi Suracco, Barto Rizzo, etc. Agostino Balderini is purposely made sententious and humourously conscious of it: Carlo Ammiani is the personification of the youth of Italy of the nobler sort. Laura Piaveni and Violetta d'Isorella are existing contrasts.—I am afraid it must be true that the style is stiff; but a less condensed would not have compassed the great amount of matter.—I see the illustrious Hutton of the 'Spectator' laughs insanely at my futile effort to produce an impression on his public. I suppose I shall have to give up and take to journalism, as I am now partly doing.—Yes! if you could get a place to say something of 'Vittoria'! Morley stated your suggestions to me, and appeared willing that it should be done in the 'Fortnightly,' if your, or some such good name fathered the article. But his opinion is that it should be a general review of me: the writer could dwell on the work pleasing him best. There is some doubt about giving a special review of a novel that has appeared in the 'Fortnightly' pages. Adieu, my friend. I beg you to write to me, as I have requested. Arthur is away, by this time in Berne. What is the address of Sandys? I do not see him at the Garrick.—I want you to bring

Baudelaire when you come; and anything you may think of besides, in the way of verse. I am being carried off from the Singing. I stand on an inexorable current. I shall look forward to meeting you with great pleasure. —Your faithful and affectionate GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Algernon Charles Swinburne.

GARRICK CLUB, *Jan.* 27, 1868.

MY DEAR SWINBURNE,—The 'Fortnightly' is no longer in the hands of a company but of a publisher, who tries to diminish the expenses as much as he can; the editor being the chief sufferer. I had to pay for the two poems. 'The Halt before Rome' has evidently been omitted from the list of what is due to you. When I see Morley I will state your complaints to him: but from the sum he gets it 's scarcely possible to pay more, without doing so out of his own pocket. It will grieve him as it does me to hear that you are dissatisfied.—I received for my 'Phaethon' (about 150 lines) £5.

Do,—if it 's not possible, as I suppose, to buy a copy of Hugo's poem, lend it to me for a day or two. They say that Garibaldi has replied to it in verse.

I propose to come and lunch with you some afternoon. Will you have me? I will stay from two or three to six, and if we are alone, we will give and take, though I shall take ten times the worth of what I give.—I have just got your 'Blake.' M. Conway's notice of it in the 'Fortnightly' is eulogistic, but whether sufficient and closely and warmly critical I can't yet say. My wife and Willie hope to greet you in the warm Spring days.—Yours ever faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, *Jan.* 28, 1868.

MY DEAREST FRED,—Historicus (on board his Thames wherry) completely smashes Seward (in his Leviathan Monitor).[1]

I am one of those who think the Monitor would sink the wherry in an engagement, and wish to silence the conquering sound of noisy writers.

If the spirit of the nation were of your temper, I should counsel Historicus's show of independence for the nation at large. Fred, it 's clear there 's no such spirit now in this pot-bellied country—none of it. Bend, while you can do so with a pretence of dignity. I declare to you, I have watched the changes of mood in the Government, the Journals—say, the people: and I have seen them moved by apprehension and by panic, and by nothing else in their foreign relations; by little else in their dealings at home. The aristocracy has long since sold itself to the middle class; that has done its best to corrupt the class under it. I see no hope but in a big convulsion to bring a worthy people forth. The monied class sees the same, and reads it—will do anything to avoid it—will eat Historicus's words and him rather than accept the challenge he provokes. You are misled by your natural hot chivalry, and don't perceive the humiliations you are bringing on.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

[1] This refers to the controversy over the *Alabama* claims. Historicus was Sir William Vernon Harcourt. Seward was Secretary of State in President Johnson's cabinet. In 1868 Lord Stanley expressed a willingness to refer the *Alabama* claims to arbitration; but the negotiations were interrupted by the demand put forward by Seward that the British recognition of the Southern States as belligerents should be taken into account in computing the damages.

To William Hardman.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 31, 1868.

DEAREST TUCK,—I have been, so please your Worship, hard at work, old boy, or I should have written to your honourable Bench.—Confound this reminiscence of your greatness under which I lived three whole years! May it please—no, it doesn't please you nor me neither. Sooner or later, as Shirley Brooks says, I was going to write, but I had to manage the 'Fortnightly' for Morley during his absence in America, and that with incessant composition and pot-boilers kept my hands tied. But I am training my toes (first and second of right foot) to indite epistles and 'Ips. Journal' while I pursue my course complacently above. So no one will be complaining, unless it be Her Majesty; for there 's a chance that in a fit of distraction I may stick a corn-plaster on the envelope instead of a Queen's Head—a horrible thought and an abominable. Right so, Tuck, and have you read England's Book.[1] It sent me up Box Hill dancing a Tupper-jig.

Oh, Tuck! What is mortal splendour after all? There may be Purgatory for thee after thou hast ceased to plant a forefoot on the necks of criminals—sniffing the incense of Kingstonian praise. Well, pass we to lighter themes. Thine ideas are those of the Crowned. I am, I was, I always shall be, a vagabond. And Heaven must love such to take me in. This is veritably as I state it.

Willie Maxse has months past had you pointed out to him (cap on, cigar in mouth, cock in th' eye—generally likerous expression) in our book of photographs. He was looking at it yesterday, and coming to you, he cried, 'That 's dear Godpapa.' He flourishes. Who could

[1] *My Journal of Life in the Highlands*, by her late Majesty Queen Victoria.

help doing so here? I am every morning on the top of Box Hill—as its flower, its bird, its prophet. I drop down the moon on one side, I draw up the sun on t'other. I breathe fine air. I shout ha ha to the gates of the world. Then I descend and know myself a donkey for doing it. Forsooth, Tuck, I have to remain in harness an unconscionable time (see Poems in 'Macmillan,' 'Fortnightly,' 'Cornhill' (to come), and articles in 'M. Post,' etc. etc., and my desk bursting with MSS.).

Now as to your invitation. I'll come if I can, and I think I can. I have to put off a pre-engagement if possible. You will see me (if I do come, as I hope) about 3 P.M. Sunday. I can't sleep away from home, as it appears to upset Marie, and we have not yet a dog, and do on the left side lean on the wilds, where there are rabbits, and may be weasels. So to soften a wife's uneasiness, I leave Surbiton 9.10 that night; catch Wimbledon 10.1, home about 11.5 P.M.

Norbiton, I salute thee. Tuck, I love thee. To thy wife my amiablest salutation, and as affable a bow as Briton on his guard dare be guilty of to thy fair guest.—
Thine, G. M. OF BOX HILL.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

GARRICK CLUB, *Feb.* 8, 1868.

MY DEAREST BOY,—I have carried about this piece of Club paper for a fortnight, having been intending to commence a letter to you there, and unable either to do that or to go on with it since. My time is occupied with work, and I am, or rather, have been, much distracted by affairs. My two months down with Captain Maxse was a dead loss of time to me.[1] I never regret anything

[1] In the Southampton election of 1867 Captain Maxse stood as Radical candidate. Meredith was an active worker on his behalf. Cf. *Beauchamp's Career*.

I am able to help him in, as you will believe, but that's another matter. We were badly beaten at Southampton, but I think it will be proved that bribery was done there. We on our side were not guilty of it, I know. It is a very corrupt place. It has been found by experience of the enlarged franchise that where there are large labouring populations depending upon hire (especially in a corrupt and languishing town like Southampton) they will be thrown into the hands of the unscrupulous rich. At all events this is one of the evils we have to contend against until the poor fellows know by enlightenment where their own interests lie and the necessity for their acting in unison and making sacrifices. Old Toryism has still a long spell of life in this country where the vitality has need to be strong in the centre of thick decay that won't be shovelled out.—I fancy Captain Maxse had to pay about £2000 for the attempt. He acted simply in a spirit of duty, that he might enter Parliament to plead the cause of the poor.—Our commercial failures of two years back still press on us. Artists and authors suffer particularly. But the strain will be over with me very soon. My novels have been kept back by having had to write on newspapers—the only things that paid.—So take this as a moral: don't think of literature as a profession. I believe you to have too much good sense.—Who are the kind people of the name of Nicolls whom you visit in Berne?—Mr. Burnand asked after you the other day, and sent his love to you. He still writes regularly on 'Punch' and puts plays on the stage. He is a distant relative—is he not?—of M. Emile Burnand your master.—I calculate that I shall be free in June, about the middle of the month, and may be with you then or later for a tour together. But would you prefer to go with the other fellows, and spend some days with me afterwards? I think it quite as well that you should not

return to England until you do so finally to begin your apprenticeship to some business—I don't mean trade, unless you like it, nor do I suppose that you much desire to come home at present. One of the nicest arrangements would be for Mama and Willie to go to some pleasant Norman or Biscayan sea-coast and welcome you there, and I could take you back to Berne. Tell me what your views are.—Perhaps if you are found to be getting too old for Dr. Müller's school, you might remove to Dresden. Spain and Spanish, I fear, would be of no use to you in the future. How much I long to meet you! Keep pure in mind, unselfish of heart, and diligent in study. This is the right way of worshipping God, and is better than hymns and sermons and incense. We find it doubtful whether God blesses the latter, but cultivate the former, and you are sure of Him. Heed me well when I say this. And may God forever bless you, I pray it nightly.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, *Feb.* 17, 1868.

Our old friend! It chokes me to think that we have lost him. I have Purcell's[1] dear old wind-blown brown gleam of a face, the manner of him, the voice and walk, more firmly stamped in my mind than most living men are. He comes up to meet me now—I see him dashed with spray—parrying a thrust from me—I can't believe he 's gone. His voice is alive in my ears. Only, I know that when I come to Holly Hill I shall feel the truth sadly enough. Poor, dear old man! This will change Summer and the yacht to you and your wife. He was so true a gentleman, with a pardonable old dog's growl now and then—after all, very rarely. I reproach myself that I should have let him ever sink a trifle in my esteem. And

[1] Purcell, skipper of Captain Maxse's yacht.

I am always on my guard against the influence of these sectional impressions, and try so much to get and keep possession of a man's character, so that I may never fall into these silly errors. It seems to me that the old man has gone carrying my debt to him away for good. The little history revealed to you by his death is wretched.—What will be done for the children? That 's the most lamentable thought of all.

Marie is in grief for the loss of Purcell. He belonged to our early marriage days. On my soul I think I shall never smell salt water or look on a grey ridge of sea or sea haze without thinking of him.

The typhus probably followed gastric fever, which one gets from fretting; it speedily sends us on.

Alas! my dear Fred, I didn't expect sad news from you.

Our Willie Maxse will be three years old in July.

Then let me have Ben.[1] I delight (so does Marie) to think of him coming. But I 'm bothered, I 'll write about him to-morrow.—Your loving

George Meredith.

To F—— J——s.

Box Hill,
Nov., Lord Guy of London Day.

Friend J——,—It being the fashionable Season in Brighton at Brighton you are, of course. Now, your way back to Kingston lies exactly by Box Hill. Will you take us en route? Do! I have not seen you for so long that on my honour I could listen to your puns with pleasure: and who could say more? We have been most unfortunate during the summer, with first the soaking, till the Inns were full right on to October. But at present Inns gape, and we can get one room for you

[1] A red retriever dog.

at the Burford or Beehive. If you are for companionship with me, J——, you will come. Write by return, and arrange. Bring all with you. If it rain, we 'll draw the blinds, let fly the corks, and dance. If it 's fair, I 'll sweat you gently over the hills and home to our tobacco Parliament. I can't say fairer.—I would send my love to Mrs. J——, but fear your tarnishing it in the transmission. But I kiss my hand to the heavens: and let her only look on your head, and she will see the act reflected.—Your friendliest GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, *Dec.* 19, 1869.

MY DEAR FRED,—Morison will take notice of your pamphlet: he says he cannot do so more than incidentally, as he would have done if you had written a book. . . . Greenwood has been (as one can conceive possible) too busy to read anything.—The 'Holy Grail' is wonderful, isn't it? The lines are satin lengths, the figures Sèvres china. I have not the courage to offer to review it, I should say such things. To think!—it 's in these days that the foremost poet of the country goes on fluting of creatures that have not a breath of vital humanity in them, and doles us out his regular five-feet with the old trick of the vowel endings—The Euphuist's tongue, the Exquisite's leg, the Curate's moral sentiments, the British matron and her daughter's purity of tone:—so he talks, so he walks, so he snuffles, so he appears divine.—I repeat with my Grannam,—to think!—and to hear the chorus of praise too! Why, this stuff is not the Muse, it 's Musery. The man has got hold of the Muses' clothes-line and hung it with jewelry.

But the 'Lucretius' is grand. I can't say how much I admire it and hate the Sir Pandarus public which has

corrupted this fine (natural) singer. In his degraded state I really believe he is useful, for he reflects as much as our Society chooses to show of itself. The English notion of passion, virtue, valour, is in his pages: and the air and the dress we assume are seen there.—I turn to Rabelais and Montaigne with relief. See what a gentleman Boccaccio is in his narration! and always manly, always fresh.—Do you care to find the Holy Grail, Fred? Twenty years ago it would have excited me. This your foremost Poet is twenty years behind his time. Of course I expect a contrary opinion from you. But answer me—isn't there a scent of damned hypocrisy in all this lisping and vowelled purity of the Idylls? Well! just as you like. It 's fashionable; it pleases the rose-pink ladies, it sells. Enough.—I am your loving

George M.

I spoke strongly to Greenwood of Bradlaugh; impressed him, I trust.

To Captain Maxse.

Box Hill, *Dec.* 27, 1869.

My dear Fred,—I return Ruskin's letter, a characteristic one. I am chiefly glad that you should be in correspondence with a man who will appreciate and stimulate you; glad too that you seem to see where he falls short, or, rather, aims blindly. It is the spirituality of Carlyle that charms him. What he says of Tennyson I too thought in my boy's days, that is, before I began to think. Tennyson has many spiritual indications, but no philosophy, and philosophy is the palace of thought. Mill is essentially a critic: it is his heart, not his mind, which sends him feeling ahead. But he really does not touch the soul and springs of the Universe as Carlyle does. Only, when the latter attempts practical dealings he is

irritable as a woman, impetuous as a tyrant. He seeks the short road to his ends; and the short road is, we know, a bloody one. He is not wise; Mill is; but Carlyle has most light when he burns calmly. Much of Ruskin's Political Economy will, I suspect, be stamped as good by posterity. He brings humanity into it. This therefore is not the Political Economy of our day.—I have turned Wendell Phillips like a drenching fireman's hose on a parson, and made him sputter and gutter and go to his wife to trim his wick. The Oration is very noble. Adieu. Write some day next year.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, 1869.

MY DEAR FRED,—. . . Will is in the garden on a rocking-horse, new gift from his Aunt. His seat is as Cardigan's entering Balaclava guns.—Of course you 've read Kinglake, very deliberate, very conscientious. He has done all the work of the History of the Crim. War except to write it. His writing is so fine—so fine (in both senses) that to say it is penmanship seems best to express it.—One sees the whole Balaclava business, as he saw it (and you) from the heights, through Kinglake's slowly-moving, dioramic opera-glass, with the fifty degree magnifying power of patient imagination, full study and testimony, superadded. It deserves praise and thanks. Contemporaneous history should thus be written: but it is not an artistic piece of history. How glorious Scarlett at the head of his 300 Greys and Inniskillens! Yet one can't help feeling that Kinglake makes them go astonishingly like the horsemen in a peepshow. Scarlett enters:—pause; now Shegogg:—pause; Aide de camp:—pause: now the Greys, presently the Innis-

killens:—So on. Very good, very bad. Adieu.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

MICKLEHAM, *Jan.* 2, 1870.

MY DEAR FRED,—It 's difficult to speak mildly of a man who calls John Mill blockhead, and dares to assume Carlyle's mantle of Infallibility on the plea that it is his 'master's.' Still I agree with much that he says of Carlyle. I hold that he is the nearest to being an inspired writer of any man in our times; he does proclaim inviolable law: he speaks from the deep springs of life. All this. But when he descends to our common pavement, when he would apply his eminent spiritual wisdom to the course of legislation, he is no more sagacious nor useful nor temperate than a flash of lightning in a grocer's shop. 'I purify the atmosphere,' says this agent. 'You knock me down, spoil my goods and frighten my family,' says the grocer.—Philosophy, while rendering his dues to a man like Carlyle and acknowledging itself inferior in activity, despises his hideous blustering impatience in the presence of progressive facts.

Read the 'French Revolution' and you listen to a seer: the recent pamphlets, and he is a drunken country squire of superordinary ability.

Carlyle preaches work for all to all. Good. But his method of applying his sermon to his 'nigger' is intolerable.—Spiritual light he has to illuminate a nation. Of practical little or none, and he beats his own brains out with emphasis.

As to what R. says of John Mill I have not the Pol. Ec. handy. I am inclined to think the present generation of P. Economists wrong—that they don't see that the obligations of Wealth pertain to its sources, and that

R. has some vague truth for a backbone to his preposterous priestly attitude and inebriate conceit as against adversaries.

The Parsonry are irritating me fearfully, but a non-celibate clergy are a terrific power. They are interwound with the whole of the Middle class like the poisonous ivy. Oh! for independence, that I might write my mind of these sappers of our strength.—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To John Morley.[1]

MICKLEHAM, *Jan.* 2, 1870.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Very glad to hear from you—I called on Morison. He told me of your passage to Glasgow and lecture on Count d'Orsay, a capital subject for a philosopher. I shall read it in the 'Fortnightly.'—Some fear struck me that you would not find things well at Lytham.

I should have written to ask leave to review Tennyson's Arthurian Cycles; but I could not summon heart even to get the opening for speaking my mind on it.—I can hardly say I think he deserves well of us; he is a real singer, and he sings this mild fluency to this great length. Malory's Morte Arthur is preferable. Fancy one affecting the great poet and giving himself up (in our days!—he must have lost the key of them) to such dandiacal fluting.—Yet there was stuff here for a poet of genius to

[1] Now Viscount Morley of Blackburn, P.C., O.M., F.R.S. Till the end of his life Lord Morley's books as they appeared were read, criticised, and appreciated by Meredith. A short list of them is appended for convenient reference; *Edmund Burke* (1867), *Critical Miscellanies* (1871), *Voltaire* (1871), *Rousseau* (1873), *On Compromise* (1874), *Diderot and the Encyclopaedists* (1878), *Burke* (1879), *Richard Cobden* (1881), *Oliver Cromwell* (1900), *Life of Gladstone* (1903). Lord Morley edited the *Fortnightly Review* (1867-83), the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1880-83), and *Macmillan's Magazine* (1883-85).

animate the figures and make them reflect us, and on us. I read the successive mannered lines with pain—yards of linen—drapery for the delight of ladies who would be in the fashion.—The praises of the book shut me away from my fellows. To be sure, there 's the magnificent 'Lucretius.'

Fred Maxse has been corresponding with Ruskin.—Anon, anon. I am not at liberty to write of the latter's monstrous assumption of wisdom.

Ah! the Hindhead and a Southwester on it in March or April!—Yes! and then to Florence.

Let me hear when you are in London. I shall not be up till about the 11th or 12th. We will dine at the Garrick, an you please. Good luck speed the 'Pall Mall.' —I rejoice to hear that your head is teeming. Did I tell you that Fred and I went to sit under Bradlaugh one evening? The man is neither to be laughed nor sneered down, nor trampled. He will be a powerful speaker. I did my best to make Greenwood understand that. It was really pleasant to hear those things spoken which the parsonry provoke. Here, at a party where our Willie entertained company of his own age, the hostess feared to see the children standing in a ring because (she said—and she is by way of being independent) the little —— (parson's children—he begets annually—the children die decennially—and he is 'chastened' but sees no natural curse—!) the little —— might think it was meant for dancing!

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 13, 1870.

MY DEAR FRIEND M.,—You will write and let me know if there is anything I can do for you. My hands are altogether at your service.

A copy of H. Rochefort's Marseillaise may interest you; it is the Republican (Red) shriek (the Irish word escapes me) over Victor Noir.[1] It 's a good study of the French period.—Well, after reading it and repressing my gorge at this undignified fury and savage friendship, I turned to a leading article in the 'Morning Post' in which the assassinated youngster is supremely sneered at as a linendraper's apprentice who caught an appetite for literature from the 'Petit Journal.' (It seems that no less a man than Weiss had some hopes of him). On the whole, I was, critically speaking, most disgusted with our high-noted friend.

This number of the 'Fortnightly' is excellent: your Condorcet to my mind an example of your best judicial style, minus the judicial excess of precision (occasionally as from an old maid to an errand boy—so like!). These studies which you put into so noble a shape and impregnate with your full mind, will help to bear good fruit in all directions. Meanwhile they are fine reading. Take to history. Preserve this style in historical narrative, and your name will not take a second rank. My dear M.! I don't know how it may be with you. I trust that you may have all your strength about you. If it ever comforts you to think of my affection, be sure that you have it.—Yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

MICKLEHAM, DORKING, *Jan.* 27, 1870.

MY DEAREST M.,—The drama of a household burnt out under my eye here, has given me some excitement. Irish Mr. Sewell, six feet five, haired like Erebus, brawny as Vulcan's first forgeman, with a sniffling English wife, whose shawl is, like her nose, always thawing off her

[1] Killed by Prince Pierre Bonaparte at Auteuil, Jan. 10, 1870.

shoulder, and a family of four, a good honest lot for that matter, lived in a hut in the corner of a field abutting on our acres, to watch potatoes grow. Sewell was away at work, his wife sniffling somewhere, when out flaps the big girl with a whinny, Fire! Fire!—and I giving a touch to 'Richmond.' I was soon in a gentle rain of thatch. The girl tumbled, and I assure you I saw the vision of Danaë in a jiffy. She lived (like woman's virtue) under a thatched roof. I saved the nuptial bed of these rash and unwearied propagators; my gardener arriving later attached himself to the pigs. There would have been, as I told him later, a chance of roast pig—! I repeated Charles Lamb's story to him. He is without imagination and 'hoped I was joking.'

. . . I'm afraid the 'Pall Mall' can't be doing well, though when I went to Greenwood he insisted on the cheerfulness of its condition.—All speak with regret of it and of what they hear of it.—The tone—eh? of the leaders doesn't seem to me so good, though it's above the newspaper type. You see they have dealt with Bradlaugh. I spoke to Greenwood about him, insisting that he was a man of power, and was not to be sneered down; and that on the whole he said certain things comforting to hear by one suffering from Simon Peter.—As to 'Harry Richmond,' I fear I am evolving his personality too closely for the public, but a man must work by the light of his conscience if he's to do anything worth reading.—I see the 'Quarterly' deals rather firmly with the 'Holy Grail'—something in these days. It is hard on the 'Lucretius'—compares the flow of the English lines with the Latin Hexameters of the poet. No one but Milton has the roll of the English line. The French Alexandrine, which I have been studying of late, is (though far off) nearer to ancient poetical music than anything we have out of Milton. When I have leisure

I hope to write some papers on poetry and versification. —I hear good things said of your Condorcet, and am convinced you are getting the right historical tone. Young Trollope complains that you employ hyphens too largely. I quote the criticism pour votre gouverne. Now good-night, my dear friend; I do but chat to amuse you, if things permit of it. Doubtless you have your eye on the news, and I need not discuss politics. Adieu.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *March* 5, 1870.

My dearest M.,—We are both with you in heart. When your heart is bowed to the black metal gates, words of the best of friends can be but poorly helpful; but think of us and our love for you when you look up and around you once again.—I had this shock when I was a little boy, and merely wondered. . . .—Your affectionate

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

Box Hill, *June* 15, 1870.

Dearest T.,—It must have been as you say. I was thinking of twenty. I send now cheque dated 24th (which is a liberty on my part). The truth is, I have sent in my work, and am waiting for payment, which I don't want to press for; and it is just possible I may have to ask you to hold on till the end of the month, when I come upon other resources sufficient for the time. You can either retain the old cheque, or tell me it is torn up.

Next week we are engaged up to (save Tuesday) Saturday morning. Remember too that the dry days are going. This next Saturday we dine out, Friday is my town day, Monday also. What do you say to Tuesday? On Wednesday and Thursday we are at

Effingham Hill. I mean, if you are at home, to be invited to you, solus, in early July—when you haven't trumpets in your gardens and are not entertaining the wealth and beauty of the district. You will see Poco.

Dickens gone! The 'Spectator' says he beat Shakespeare at his best, and instances Mrs. Gamp as superior to Juliet's nurse. This in a critical newspaper!

My love to all at home, and hope that they will be footing our brown hill soon.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

BOX HILL, *July* 6, 1870.

Sweet Justice of Norbiton, neighbour of Jones,
 Have you paid in the £15 cheque?
The account at my banker's has recently grown
 As fat as the . . . .

But 'tis sweating already, it dwindles apace:
 So I pray you (and here 's to your luck)
Don't give to the matter a minute more grace,
 And adieu, Serenissimo Tuck!

Halloa! you are off to the Isle of Wight? Do you remember the 'race' off Sandown? Perhaps I may run down for two or three days.—Thus our affairs: Marie waits to let her house, when she will convoy Wilkins to Nonancourt. I remain working somewhere for three weeks, pouncing on friends; then I go to fetch her back. We return in September. Arturus has received an invitation from Marie's sister to go to Joubasseau in Dauphiné for his holidays (Basle, Geneva, Chambéry), so he will be comfortable. I shan't be able to meet him. I wish you could see some of the letters he has written lately. They speak promisingly.

My novel 'Harry Richmond' is out of my hands and

appears in the Cornhill the 1st October. By that time I hope to have another ready.

Wilkins in very fine condition. Ourself middling—in want of outing. Marie well. I hope the illustrious Editor of 'Punch' has got round again and rounder. Adieu to you all.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

The last of dear old St. Bernard was that he was down on his back. We are off for a couple of days to Lady Caroline Maxse's, Effingham Hill. She has taken to Marie.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

ENGLAND, BOX HILL, *July* 14, 1870.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—Write to Madame Poussielque[1] when you know the day Professor Zeller starts, and go yourself that day. The later, the better, for your Aunt Betty does not leave here till the first days of August, and I should like you to see her, and to have her report of your condition. Besides she is charming society. Do not fail at one time or other of your visit to make the expedition to the Grande Chartreuse. I am sure it will delight you. Whatever money you may be in need of you shall have. Send me (clearly written) a detail of the value of your florins in francs, and how much the journey to Joubasseau costs you. When there, use what money you have remaining for pocket-money, and more shall be forwarded to you, according to the necessity of the case. I wish you to be careful, but to feel tolerably independent, and in all things to enjoy your holiday.

It has looked recently as if we should have war between France and Prussia, and I fear it must come on; but I think not immediately. When men's brains are in-

[1] The eldest Miss Vulliamy had married Commandant Poussielque, of Pont de Beau Voisin, Savoy.

sufficient to meet the exigencies of affairs, they fight. If the war should burst out, I shall be grieved, for I like France, and yet see the good for Europe of having a strong central State composed of a solid people. There is no need at present to consider the course that you should take in the event of war encircling little Würtemberg. You will like the Commandant (equal in military rank to our major) very much. He has seen a great deal of campaigning both in the Crimea and in Algeria. He is a Frenchman of the best kind. You will not find him an admirer of Prussia, but keep your judgment in balance on all questions upon which you have no personal experience, and have had no opportunities for reflection. . . . I have passed Chambéry and been at Grenoble. All the Dauphiné country is beautiful, so you are sure to be pleased. I trust with all my heart you will be happy, and am your loving father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *July* 21, 1870.

MY DEAR MORLEY,— . . . What news!—this of Prévost Paradol![1] Why talk of the horrors of war when we are fronting artillery at every second of our lives.—My 'Pall Mall' comes to me this morning with the most ludicrous blunder about a name of a place ever printed. Forbach is treated of as being in the Black Forest (where there is a little village of the name), and the 'Pall Mall' speculates upon why hostilities should have commenced there!—Our friend can afford such errors less than any other journal.—On the whole, I side with France, or so incline. The instinct of the people in seizing an opportunity to

[1] Lucien Anatole Prévost Paradol, journalist and *littérateur*, member of French Academy (1865), was born in Paris, August 8, 1829. In 1870 he was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States of America, but had scarce arrived in Washington when his position became so difficult that, losing heart, he killed himself.

dispute the aggrandisement of Prussia is right: it is not a Vanity war nor a King's, but a people's war—war of Germans and Frenchmen; a trial of actual strength for supremacy: and it was nonsense to think of postponing it, ruinous to delay.—The tone of our Press is sickening.—No correspondents allowed, so my chance is gone.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, 1870.

My dear M.,—I found the boy still troubled yesterday, and to-day the doctor says he will have to rest for two or three days: meanwhile he goes on well. Very doubtful whether Marie will be able to bring him over this week. The next I must give to Fred Maxse. Afterwards, you willing, we may come. That is, if I am on the spot. It 's possible that I may start to French quarters for Borthwick.—If you like I will run to you on Thursday. This war agitates me; gazing on an old tree, or talking with you, are my febrifuges. I have just had the Book of Orm [1] sent to me from the author. It may be a settling, it 's not a composing draught. The newspapers are mere chips of dry biscuit to my devouring appetite for telegrams and details. Yesterday and to-day, thank heaven, they haven't (I don't see the 'Times') sermonized. England hasn't screamed and scolded and clacked and nodded her cap, and sniffled to her clergyman for comfort.—I wrote some verse to you this morning, but as it isn't finished can't send it. Taste the beginning, perhaps never to end—never to have tail—like scornèd pigs.

'Friend, when the thundercloud is low,
And in the expectancy and throe,
Field, hill, and wave of forest grow
  The hue that edges black on fair,

[1] *The Book of Orm*, by Robert Buchanan.

No voice is heard, and not a sound,
Though listen all the hollow ground;
But swift I have known a white dove thread the air.

So now these lines to you, between
The loaded darkness and dead green,'

Etc., etc. no more space.

May our hearts be stout, and we prove our begetting honest!—Ever yours, GEORGE M.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *July* 25, 1870.

MY DEAREST M.,— . . . I am glad you like the verses. The next batch you will find plunge deeper. Mind, I swore them as to you, and you (though you blinked at the time, as much as to tell me I was intimidating you) consented to take them.—I am in poor mood for writing: an attack of stomach keeps me singular in ideas, and, like the contemplative dervish, with a fixed eye on the centre of my being, whence does not issue song at present.

The war of '70 is direct issue of '66. Just as we abused the Prussians then we howl at the French now, but the tremendous armaments on both sides were meant for this duel, and it mattered very little what was the pretext for the outbreak. Surely it 's a case of Arcades Ambo. The French felt themselves perpetually menaced by distended Prussia, irritated by her tone, even alarmed by the rumour and dread of projects the existence of which her antecedents might seem to warrant. At any rate it was a fight to come on; and here we have it; and if we are energetic and wise it may be the last of the great fights of Europe. The two foremost States in war and intellect may well be committed to cut the bloody tangle. I feel deeply for the Germans; I quite understand the ardour of the French. I think their cause, from their point of

view, thoroughly good, and not likely to succeed. Armies can't do it: they can't check the tide of a great nation. As to the Emperor, he appears to have thought the season for a trial of the new breech-loader field-pieces and Mitrailleuse had come, just as Bismarck could not afford to delay in trying his needle-gun on the Austrians. The Emperor had note of warning that his routed Prussians were also busy perfecting mysterious instruments. Poor devilry! All devilry is poor in the contemplation. But it is still the chief engine of history. You and I are forced into our channels by it. Friend, in the woods, you and I may challenge the world to match us in happiness. Out of them I feel myself pulled back a century or so.—And into a splash of shuddering matter.

By the way, you must remember that the Emperor did not make the grief against Prussia. It came to his hand. It was deep in the French heart. I turn to the 'Book of Orm' and find a refrain—

'Grow, Seed, blossom, Brain,
Deepen, deepen, into pain.'

Title of piece 'The Devil's Mystics.' There!

Again—

'God feared the thing He fashioned
And fled into a cloud!'

Public of Britain! Here he is—your poet!

'Since that day, with cloudy face,
Of His own handiwork afraid,
God from His Heavenly hiding-place
Peered at the thing He made.'

Aha! If He made Bismarck and Napoleon according to the view of the Stock Exchange, the British Spinster, Clericus and Press (siding for once with their betters), then no wonder!—I would not mind our language if it

came from an unselfish people: but a people notoriously craving peace for comfort's sake, and commerce's—they do but scold, they provoke contempt.—I regret bitterly that I am not out on a post of observation. I may still go for a month.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *Oct.* 25, 1870.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,— . . . I am not very rich at present, but I don't want you to be without pocket-money and minor comforts.—See that you have warm clothing for the winter—all that is really needful I gladly pay for. I leave it to your good sense to take measures to avoid chills, and to take daily reasonable exercise, and not to walk to excess. Your gastric attack last year will serve for a warning. Don't ever sit in clothes you have sweated in: the trouble of going upstairs and 'grooming' yourself saves trouble, and worse, in the end. Fellows who contract illnesses are usually guilty (I don't say always) of indolence—carelessness is only one form of indolence.—You will note that I lay stress on the physical condition. I do so for the reason that it is the index to the moral condition in young men. It is ten to one that a healthy lad is of good general worth. If not physically healthy he will not be of much value. The day comes when we are put to the test, and it is for this day we should prepare with cheerful heart. Don't imagine me to be lecturing you. I have favourable reports of you, and I merely repeat simple words of advice that it will be well for you to keep in mind.—Tell Professor Zeller, with my compliments, that if there is a fund for the wounded soldiers in Stuttgart, I shall be glad if he will put my name down for the subscription of £1,

which he can charge to the next account. I cannot afford more just now. The French peasantry around Sedan claim everything of us that we can give. They are barely held up in life by the bread we are able to furnish; and a third of France will be demanding succour in the winter. Horrible to think of!—But do not let compassion or personal sympathy make your judgment swerve. This war is chargeable upon France, and the Emperor is the Knave of the pack. Two generations of Frenchmen have been reared on the traditions of Napoleonism, and these meant the infliction of wrongs and outrages on other nations for the glory and increase of their own. They elected a Napoleon for chief because of his name, and in spite of his known character. It is said, the French peasantry did not want war; that their ignorance offended in electing this man; but who can deny that it was the Napoleonic prestige which gave him his first step to the throne by overwhelming votes? This man was the expression of their ignorance, or folly, or vanity; he appealed to the Napoleonism in them, and had a prompt response. A more ignoble spectacle than the recriminations of Emperor and people upon one another as to the origin of the war, after defeat, history does not show. The Germans, on the contrary, reap the reward of a persistently honourable career in civic virtue. Consider what the meaning of civic virtue may be. It comprises a multitude of other virtues. As to German boasting, why the English also are great boasters. See the best in those about you. I say this, and I admire and respect the Germans, and God knows my heart bleeds for the French. But my aim, and I trust it will be yours, is never to take counsel of my sensations, but of my intelligence. I let the former have free play, but deny them the right to bring me to a decision. You are younger, have a harder task in doing that; you have indeed a task in

discerning the difference between what your senses suggest and what your mind. However, try not to be let into some degree of injustice to your host, the German people, out of pity for France.—We had a capital time at Eastbourne, good bathing, Willie paddling up to his knees in salt water half the day. Now we have the autumnal gales and Box Hill looking on the last colours of the year. I saw your Grandpapa Meredith on my way to Captain Maxse's; he had been unwell, but was better; he asked after you and so did Mrs. M. They were anxious as to your situation in the territory of war. Captain Maxse is out and out French; Mr. Morison intensely German; Mr. Morley and I do our utmost to preserve an even balance. There is talk of an armistice, but Paris must fall before the French will seriously treat for peace. Count Bismarck gives audience to-day to that deleterious little Frenchman Thiers, who has been poisoning his countrymen for half a century, and now runs from Court to Court, from minister to minister, to get help to undo his own direct work. Count Bismarck will be amused, for he has a keen appreciation of comedy. Philosophers would laugh aloud at the exhibition of the author of the 'Consulate and the Empire' in the camp at Versailles. Modern France has been nourished on this lying book.—Here in Mickleham we are naturally anxious about the Nonancourt [1] people. The latest telegrams say that the Germans are moving on Dreux—no great distance from the colony. You can fancy how sad the Old House looks now the good old man has gone.[2]—God bless you, my dear boy. If you have anything to narrate of the war, the wounded, the prisoners, etc., it might be useful to me. Train your eyes to observe, and while they are at that

[1] At Nonancourt, in Normandy, on the Avre, Mrs. Meredith's three brothers lived and owned wool-spinning mills—close neighbours of the Waddington family, owning cotton mills on the same river.

[2] The death of Mr. Justin Vulliamy.

work keep the action of your mind in abeyance. Young eyes can observe shrewdly, but the opinions of young men are not quite so important.—I am your loving father,

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

21 Cavendish Place,
Eastbourne, Sussex.

My dearest Tuck,—Motives of Economy decided us to come here, much to my regret. We were at Tongswood at the Cotterills', and it was cheap to run to the Sussex, near to the Isle of Wight, coast. But O you! had you written to Holly Hill you would have fetched me over to Sandown, and I should have fixed the bargain with a lodgement-letter. I remained for a fortnight at Maxse's yachting when the gales permitted it. Then joined Marie at Tongswood, good air, good hostess and host. Eastbourne is on the whole pleasant. This salt-water fetches me round, Tuck. It is the next best to mountain air.

Marie and I thanked you for your thorough kind letter. I knew how you would both feel on hearing of the dear good old man's death. A just man, not lost for ever to his family, for the example of such a man is a constant presence. But a dead loss to the poor.

So you do both care for 'H. Richmond.'[1] I hoped it. I wish some one like Shirley Brooks would let it be known it 's mine. Lethbridge tells me he has seen it attributed to Lever! A word from you, Tuck, in the august Ear of Punch, anon, anon, sir. Mind and tell me how you like it as you go on. I shall have another to follow when 'Richmond' ceases, and so by drumming may make the public hear me at least.—Oh this war. I burst with pity for the French, but can't say they have not deserved defeat. Was ever a nation so shattered? In nothing

[1] *The Adventures of Harry Richmond,* then appearing in the *Cornhill Magazine.*

have they done well, since Napoleon gave the wink to Gramont to roar in the Chamber.

My love to you all with the children. Kisses to you and them from Willie Godson. You should see him in his paddle-boots in the low-tide pools.

Tuck, you did not reply to my letter because you were working for Lee Steere and Baggallay! Marie will write to D'Troïa on her return to Box. She did not at once owing to hesitation as to the course to take, which ultimately Economy, our damned old friend, decided for us, and not badly, except for the loss of you two and a certain particular quality (I fancy it) haunting your district.

Have I made it plain to you that the feelingness of your letter to Mickleham was much felt there? I 've no more space, Tuck, dear heart. I could chatter to you like a summer brook. Adieu. Imagine me talking on as I do from hour to hour.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *Dec.* 23, 1870.

MY DEAREST ARTHUR,—I hope you will get this letter on the morning of Christmas Day to greet you and wish you happiness, strength, and fortune, which results from the two former gifts.—There will be money for you. Meantime if you are in want of funds, you can apply to the Professor for assistance with my sanction. I know I can rely on you to be moderate, and you in turn will feel that I desire you to have sufficient for your needs. Supposing you should go to Heidelberg for a few days you must have the wherewithal. Be careful to be warmly clad. And when on a tour have a care of your tongue and your company. The Professor says you do not consort with Germans at all. I am grieved at this. I am sure you

do not altogether underrate the fine qualities of German youth; but perhaps your immediate sympathies, and a somewhat exaggerated sensitiveness, stand in your way. It will be a pity, if this is so, and for more reasons than one. If you do not cultivate the people you are living amongst in your youth, you will fail in having pleasant places to look back on—landmarks of your young days. And besides, the Germans are your hosts, and you owe them at least a guest's thankfulness. I esteem them deeply for their fine moral qualities. Just now they are abusing us roundly, but that will pass away. I know they have the capacity for friendship, and that as a rule English friendships are not so lasting. Look around you, and try to be accessible to your German associates. Consider whether you are not yielding to luxurious predispositions in your marked preference for English ones. You will see enough of the latter when you return here.—I have had a letter from Mr. Jessopp, in which he suggests that you might when you come back go to Oxford and try for the Taylour Scholarship in modern languages. Your knowledge of German might give you a chance. Are you sure that you are thoroughly grounded in German to stand a sharp competitive examination?—that is, to write good scholarly German prose; and perhaps translate into German verse. Set to your mind this task. Let me hear what you think of it. By winning the Scholarship you might be on your way to a fellowship. I will do my best to support you; that you may be sure of. But you will have to fall to work rigorously. Of course I like you to indulge in composition, but now is the time to store facts, to sharpen your weapon, to make yourself capable by serving your apprenticeship. This is what the Germans do—they serve their apprenticeship thoroughly; and as they are not critics before their time, they are competent critics when the time comes.

Don't think I preach too much. I am naturally anxious about you. I have passed through the wood, and know which are the paths to take, which to avoid. By following my directions you will spare yourself many troubles, many a heartache.—Mr. Morley, who is an Oxford man, says that you would have a fair chance of the Taylour Scholarship, if you have a grammatical and literary mastery of German. You would have to choose two languages. Absolute excellence in one would land you victor. Mr. Swinburne gained the Scholarship through his knowledge of French, which is consummate. Probably Professor Max Müller would be one of the examiners.

We have now the winter on us. Let me hear what you are doing, and how it fares with you. You never speak of the other fellows living with the Professor. Can you make nothing of them?—Have you had your interview with Marshal Canrobert? Major Poussielque is commanding, I believe, at Langres, which is now invested. Good-bye, my dear boy, and God be with you.—Your loving father,
GEORGE MEREDITH.

Do not forget to present my warmest compliments and my Christmas greetings to Professor Zeller and his wife.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, S.W., *Christmas* 1870.

Yes, Fred, what you say of the beautiful picture presented by an Ascetic priesthood which shall be allowed marriage that one child of the union may reproduce the cultivated virtues of the parents, is very true. Something of this I have said before (though you will not remember it); but I objected and still object to the priesthood. Why any priesthood? Surely when I see you walk from Holly Hill to Bursledon in stole and cope and

beretta I cannot but feel at times that you undoubtedly have what I confess I have thought once or twice before —a tendency towards extremes; though the demure look you assume is very becoming and eclipses all the curates ever dreamed of by a pulpit-stricken virgin. But I object to your taking on a sacerdotal garb. It is true that you should have a distinctive dress, and I think it right that Purcell should have one likewise. The Basin of Miraculous Water which he carries about that you may rub it upon the stomachs of this generation would, I perceive clearly, not impress mankind with a proper sense of its holiness, if you and he were not peculiarly attired, and in our climate you would not (at least not yet) go about like a couple of St. Johns. Still I demur to a priestly garb—the more especially when I bear in mind your late extraordinary oration against One who turned the Water into Wine—in which you so violently denounced Him for having done so. Let me remark parenthetically that I do not deem Him unwise or misguided in this matter: but you will declare that I wish to force an argument, and I let the subject pass. That the parents should be separated immediately after the birth of one child, is, I am prepared to say, a mistake in your doctrine. It is not human. You state that you have become superhuman. All are not as you, however. I have read in the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of your appalling invasion of the banquet given by the Mayor of Southampton to the American Plenipotentiaries come to treat for the admission of Great Britain among the States of the Union. It appears that you approve the policy of our becoming one Star in the spangled Banner. I have myself previously advocated the measure. But, as I never can go so far as you, I cannot countenance you in exclaiming that you are the Water God of Hamble Point, and then at a given signal to Purcell, making cockshies of all the

wine-bottles on the Mayor's hospitable board, and drenching the guests with water from an enormous hose in connection with the main-pipes. Here I decidedly join in the condemnation of you pronounced by the newspapers. Your behaviour was essentially tyrannical. That I was prepared for. But it was also indiscreet, for it will raise the masses not only against you but against the element you adore. If every one of these American envoys had come from the State of Maine, you would but have given them their evening dose. As it is, you have disgusted the majority. You will have seen my defence of you in the 'Mg. Pt.' It is weak, because I really could not say much. I have restrained Morley's hand both in the 'Saturday' and the 'Fortnightly.' The joke in the 'Times'—that 'the notorious Naval Captain who walked over Hampshire with his Neptune behind him, drew the water which he dashed at the people's bellies from his brain, and had apparently an inexhaustible supply'—is neither witty nor laughable. But that it is thought wit, and is laughed at, should make you reflect. There is evidently the will to laugh. I consider this a damnatory sign.

I know your rejoinder perfectly.—Extremes are the chief teachers:—One excess corrects another; Truth must out in any shape. Very well. In December of 1866 I was finally convinced that you would on all subjects take your own course; or at least imagine you were doing it by going further than any one else would or dared go. Voilà! The poet has said, Ire necesse est—we must go on: and each in his own way, I suppose.—I have just finished the History of the inextinguishable Sir Harry Firebrand of the Beacon, Knight Errant of the 19th century, in which mirror you may look and see—My dear Fred and his loving friend, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

GARRICK CLUB, *Dec.* 26, 1870.

MY DEAR LORD MAYOR,—All Christmas honours and delights to you!

The other day I quietly informed Morley of your elevation.[1] Looking at him (about one minute subsequently) I saw him collecting his editorial fragments with a hand pressed hard on his fore midriff. He faintly expressed his amazement, but, as became a hero, his first thought was for his friend—Morison, he said, must not swallow this unheard-of pill without due preparation: it would be too much for him in his sad state. We agreed to concoct a rigmarole, and write an account of a Kingston Pantomime—'Tuck Transformed'—telling him at the end of it that all was true. Morley and I have determined at the first intimation of success of the French arms to get up a subscription for an

Apotheosis of Tuck.

A Christmas table of Wild Boar's Head, Ribs of Beef,
Plum P. with honest hands grasping
below. Blessedness above—in the
Centre the Great One rising.

At Nonancourt they have the Uhlans.

Henri Poussielque is at Langres now in the thick of it, a good soldier, and I trust he may be spared. Once more, Tuck, for the fortieth time, I tell you to look at my 'Ode to France' in the forthcoming number of the Fortnightly review.

And now may all legitimate pleasures be yours, may your wife still see you scaling eminences, and accept my love and esteem, and may your children flourish, as I am happy to state that Willie Godson does, and Arthur of Stuttgart.—Your cordial GEORGE MEREDITH.

[1] To the Mayoralty of Kingston-on-Thames.

To Captain Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 3, 1871.

MY DEAR FRED,—Your last letter from Effingham Hill reached me (with the date on the envelope Dec. 9) on Sunday morning, open. I have written to the Postmaster-General about it.—According to appointment I walked up to Ranmore, hailed for you in dense fog, and had, like the just man, nothing but the sound of my own voice for answer.

Good health to you and all dear to you this New Year! It begins lamentably. We need to be braced.

The French seem upon their final errand, as far as Paris is concerned.—Tell me how you take to my Ode now that you have it.—Karl Blind's article is good: Von Sybel 's a professorial diversion—one smells the cognac of victory. Still I like him and note in him curiously where the German mind, broad though it is, flattens. The French points up. That the two should not be in harmony is our desperate look out. Adieu, my dear Fred.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 27, 1871.

MY DEAR FRED,— . . . Your speech reads capitally. I heard from Harrison at a dinner some time back that you spoke well at the London meeting; but some one told me that you obeyed a voice bidding you 'cut it short.' Is it the fact?

Things are saddening enough in France. But I do not remember the gloomy forecasts following the Wars of Napoleon I.? The Germans have retaliated in coin. They too must pay for it. These developments only prove that our speculations were more advanced than

realities. Through such a course of teaching men must go. Can you pretend to believe that France was not in need of the bitterest of lessons? Her philosophers said one thing, but military glory stuck to the passions of her people. And many of her philosophers allowed themselves to be hoodwinked by the idea that France should be dominant 'for the good of mankind,' instead of seeking to make her dominant by virtue and a bright example. She trusted to the sword without even testing her steel. She is down. I grieve for her; I detest the severities practised upon her. But I cannot forget that she appealed to the droit du plus fort. Nor can I forget that she has always been the perturbation of Europe. The Germans may be. That is to be seen. They at least are what they pretend to be. A considerable number of cheap prophets have followed their triumphant march howling. I prefer to wait without prophesying. Let France train a virtuous democracy, and she will spring a mine in Germany amply to be revenged on the Hohenzollerns. Her cries of vengeance now are after the pattern—too shockingly similar!—of Ancient Pistol. She 'eats and ene she swears.'

What I wish is that you and I should look to the good future of men with some faith in it, and capacity to regard current phases of history without letting our sensations blind and bewilder us. I am neither German nor French, nor, unless the nation is attacked, English. I am European and Cosmopolitan—for humanity! The nation which shows most worth, is the nation I love and reverence.

Confess that the French have conducted themselves like mere children throughout. The probation may accelerate their growth and bring their practice up to their best professions. The Germans have behaved as the very sternest of men, caring more for their Fatherland

than for the well-being of men in the mass. I am susceptible of admiration of their sterling qualities, holding nevertheless that they will repent of the present selfish restriction of their views.—Rage at me, Fred! It is better to bend the knee to Wisdom than march in the chorusing ranks of the partizans.—I think with pain that the Germans enter Paris this very day! But the City is not a 'holy City' for me. The astonishing delusion which makes Frenchmen think it so is one proof of rudderless brains. Morley is not 'German.' He agrees with me that it would have been a silly madness to create a terrible and a justly wrathful enemy for ourselves (looking to the origin of this war), on the chance of securing a frenzied, fantastical ally. So will you in time. Generous sympathies hold you spell-bound.—Your ever loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To —— ——.

BOX HILL, *March* 23, 1871.

MY DEAR ——,—I will answer as plainly as you have written. I cannot but be shocked and grieved to think of the effect my manner of speaking has had in clashing with your 'opinions, ideas, and likings.' But that this should prompt you to tell me that it makes my society seem baneful to you; and that only with me do you suffer the consciousness that you fail to get new strength, and that your complaint of me is not captious because I am the only friend who has ever caused you to complain—these are accusations which point in one direction, that is, to the end of our intimacy. You consent to say that upon the larger matters we are one. I have thought so, and have considered the minor differences too small to dwell on, the possible expression of them by one or the other of us too mean a subject for the preciousness of friendship in our short life to brood on. For I am

sensitive, and I likewise have thought myself here and there roughly used by you. But I pardoned the offending minute when the hour had struck, and never thought of identifying the offence with my friend. I chose to blame myself, as the safer way of closing a slight wound. It seems that I have been roughening you for six months. When I last came over to you I was bright with the happiness of being with you, and I remember I denounced (as I supposed I might do to a friend) a poem that struck me as worthless. I spoke like a man coming off a country-road fasting. It may be too often my manner. I might well think my friend would not let it live with him, and that he knew my mind better than to allow a sense of variance to spring from such differences in open talk. Possibly a nature that I am proud to know never ceases in its growth, is passing now through some delicate stage which finds me importunate; or you feel that you have outstripped me, and are tempted to rank me with the vulgar. I can bring a thousand excuses for a letter that I have read often to assure myself it is among the things which are, but arrive only at the conclusion I have named. We will see one another as little as we can for two or three years, and by and by may come together again naturally. And if not, you will know I am glad of the old time, am always proud of you, always heart in heart with you on all the great issues of our life, and in all that concerns your health and fortunes. I suffer too much to-day to desire that any explanation should restore us to our past footing. Almost I am tempted to hope that I am quite valueless to you, for as I am not a man to send such a letter as you have just written to me, without deeply weighing every word in it and probable signification of its burden to the reader, or without weighing my feelings well against my friend's, so I am not the man to receive one without

determining to abandon a position that has exposed me to be wounded. What you have permitted yourself to write, and I to quote from you, cuts friendship to the ground. That I should be the only one of your friends ever to have done you harm, is not a nice distinction to reflect on. But I think I have said enough. I have answered you plainly and fully, and as to a sane man master of the meaning of his words and meaning exactly what they commonly convey.—I am ever yours faithfully and warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

GARRICK CLUB, *June* 12, 1871.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—The enclosed letter will introduce you to a lady who is the mother of (I met him at Mr. Benecke's at Mickleham, three days before the declaration of war last year) a Lieutenant von Schweizerbarth, a very gallant young officer. I have the letter from his brother, and I wish you to know him; from what I saw of him he is a gentleman, and I shall be glad to hear that you have made his acquaintance. He was, I believe, in all the chief actions and battles of the Würtemberg army, and before Paris, and fought at Le Bourget. He constantly sent communications to his mother during the progress of the war, and these were forwarded to Mickleham and were singularly modest and very interesting. Let me know whether you have seen him when you next write.

To-morrow is your birthday, my dear boy, and we all wish you happiness. I put down £2 as a tip to you, and you will receive £10 out of my money order to Professor Zeller for your journey either on the Danube or where you will. Out of this £12 I suppose you will find

enough. I know that when I was a lad it would have made me jump like the French statue of Freedom on the column of the Bastille. The trip you propose looks promising. As to Vienna, you are quite aware of my objections to your going there. Still if you give me your word to behave honourably I shall not oppose your going. Dr. Sana's last address in Vienna was No. 5 Kleeblattgasse near the Graben. I am sure he would be delighted to see you, but whether he is in Vienna now I cannot tell. Captain Brackenbury lives in England. He was 'Times' Correspondent with the army of Prince Frederick-Charles from Orleans to Le Mans. If you see Dr. Sana, perhaps he will take you round the beautiful Hollenthal and up the Schneeberg, as he did me, and it would be capital fun for you. The Schneeberg is about eight hours from Vienna (that is, you will be near the Chalets in that time). Go to the Belvedere at Vienna; the pictures are notable; there are superb Titians. The hotel Stadt Frankfort has good cookery, and if you mount to the third floor is not dear. It is close to the Graben, and is therefore the most central place you could find, though a little dearer than some of the suburb hotels, which are, however, dirty, I am told.—But here is your Aunt Sarah inviting you to Dauphiné again. What do you say? It rests with you to decide upon your course. At any rate, write to her.—On the 10th your Mama presented us with a little girl; so besides a brother you have now a sister, and I hope no more. Mother and babe are in excellent condition. I think I shall be at Stuttgart some time in August. This is not certain; it depends on supplies, but I want very much to see you and shall do my utmost to come.—Your loving father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur Cecil Blunt.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 4, 1871.

My dear Blunt,—Would it suit you as well to come on Saturday week? Some one makes a point of asking me to leave home on Sunday, and it strikes me that wet weather on this small and (except in babies) barren crib would act evilly on your nervous system. But, as I want you to come to walk you over these hills, decide positively for this Saturday if you are engaged for the following Saturday. Now this is plain. In any case prepare to tramp, fair or foul. And write to me.—Your faithful

George Meredith.

To Captain Maxse.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 11, 1871.

My dear Fred,—Willie is delighted with his toy, and all day long we hear shots and may see men transformed into women in a jiffy—to the mockery of the actual!—Will your poet's dreams ever bring us to the happy state of toys, that one crack in the eye may turn a hairy beast into a lovely beauty? You quote your poets, Fred, and expect them to perform just similar prodigies. Not what should be, but what can, as a step thereunto, is the reasonable aim. Nor will any of your pop-guns pelleted with uncompromising decisions affect much the existing state of things, though they will, I often fear, wear you out before your time. You do well, and even nobly, but you are one half wrong, for you go against nature, and nature says that to work soundly the creature must be in that state of contentment to which philosophy points you and poetry elevates you. You deny to man the right to be in this state while there is one miserable upon the earth, and you deny to the little ones peace in their infancy because of the existence of error. To

put it in one word, the character of your opposition is impatience. Adieu.—I love you, and am yours,

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 2 (1871).

DEAREST TUCK,—Our letters have crossed. Yours has given me great pleasure. The hand of the workman is inspired by praise, and I know that you and the unpurchaseable D'Troïa never give it but honestly.

It struck me that a perusal of the book [1] without enforced pauses might lead you to see that the conception was full and good, and was honestly worked out. I resisted every temptation to produce great and startling effects (after the scene of the Statue, which was permissible in art, as coming from a boy and coloured by a boy's wonder).

Note, as you read, the gradual changes of the growing Harry, in his manner of regarding his father and the world. I have carried it so far as to make him perhaps dull towards adolescence and young manhood, except to one studying the narrative—as in the scenes with Dr. Julius. Such effects are deadly when appearing in a serial issue. I was here and there hand-tied, too, by gentlemanly feeling in relation to the reigning Royal House, sweet Tory Tuck! or I should (and did on paper) have launched out. The Speech at the City Banquet would have satisfied a Communist Red originally. And I had planned startling doings for the season of the Grand Parade. But I constrained myself. I suppose I am unlucky, for I hear the novel does not move. It is confounded by Mudie with the quantity coming out.

Let me hear of your address at Horsham.

Shall you have your Gold Barge on the Mole to float

[1] *The Adventures of Harry Richmond.*

down to Kingston in? If so, I should like to accompany you. I have often desired to eat a swan on board, and see my countrymen kneeling on the tow-path as the procession goes by.

We have decided to enlarge our cottage, if the walls will stand it, and then we shall have a spare bedroom for friends, and you will visit us. Even now—we have hardly the courage to suggest it—you could have our room at the Burford Inn, and pass a day or two in this region, walking about as in the period when you mooned musically over the tantalizing siege. Reply to this point at your leisure.—Do you think that Shirley Brooks[1] would care to read Richmond? I don't know his address in Regent's Park.

The babes are well. Willie Godson has arrived at the stage of younker, and in him our dwelling has to rejoice that it possesses all in one, a perpetually rolling barrel, an incessant trumpet, a fife indifferently performed upon, a door creaking to every wind, a questioning machine, a hive of bees gone mad in the solstice and mistaking our ears for honey-bells—add on a cat, or its gut, striving after melody untaught. When haply I want to finish a last volume by sending a troublesome old gentleman to Bedlam, I shall bring the Younker on the scene, who will finish him quickly.

Marie Eveleen has shown a taste for dancing. I gave her inadvertently a first lesson, and am now her marked victim. She will have me, and I have to dance her, and sing her, and trot about the room until, I assure you, half an hour of it is equal to as much of dumb-bells.

She was Jenner-ated last week, and has taken well, is a new woman. Adieu.—My love to you all, and I am ever your affectionate G. M.

[1] Then editing *Punch*.

To Tom Taylor.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 18, 1871.

MY DEAR TOM,—How I envy you the new subject you have chosen ! [1] It has been ringing through me all the morning. I feel like a man who has been introduced to the beautiful woman of a friend, and found her incomparable, made for him himself, and all he can do is to cry out in honesty—take warning if you don't espouse her within a fortnight, and further, if even then you don't do justice to her, positive and spiritual, I feel myself released from the obligation to respect your claims, I will challenge your reputation, and I will beat her forthwith, in contempt of you.

Why not first write the story, and then dramatize it ? It would make as lovely a story as striking a drama. For the latter it has every splendid and noble quality. Oh ! you happy fellow. But be worthy of your luck. Let nothing delay you,—I repeat my first warning.

What I just fear is, that you will make the brother a villain. Give him some higher ground of action, drop villany. There is here a chance of lending the theme a touch of old tragedy of the classic idea. For this purpose of course you must heighten the hero's character, and have him to be more than a simple captain of horse. Jacobitism could hardly inspire him : the sense of fealty might, and it might give occasion to put stress on the ancient notion of loyal sentiment to a race in a young man's heart—inherited. The brother then, standing for law, order, and the like, might think the State had reason to dread this youth. The sister would take the woman's view. Then you have the three in a perfect triangle, fit for your best powers—or mine.

[1] Refers to Tom Taylor's play, *Lady Clancarty, or Wedded and Wooed*, first produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre, March 9, 1874.

The above only to throw you a modest hint from your hasty outline.—Ever lovingly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Dec.* 7, 1871.

MY DEAREST M.,—. . . Oh Heavens! what treachery, I heard of it on Sunday at Effingham Hill. And without consulting me! One comfort is, you haven't a tree on the Estate—not a shrub.[1] Why, I know the house. I inspected it—I rejected it long before you had an idea of it! But I confess I 'm jealous now you have really gone and made it your own.

Now to business—I have a Grand Ode to France—called simply 'France 1870': from my point of view of sympathy and philosophy; which I think is ours. Latterly I have felt poetically weakened by the pressure of philosophical reflection, but this is going, and a fuller strength comes of it, for I believe I am within the shadow of the Truth, and as it 's my nature to sing I may now do well. The amount of space will possibly be 4 or 4½ pages. Do not print it too close. I will send it on Monday or Tuesday next; and I should wish you to forward a proof to Harrison as well as to me, that I may have his opinion on it, if he will be so condescending as to give it, with possible suggestions, before the hour for returning to printer.—Let me hear from you that you will take it. I can say that it 's worth a place, but there should not be delay in outing with it. If you won't I must, and O my poor purse!

Fred as usual. He declares he knows a lady—a great novel-reader—who finds 'Harry Richmond' quite unintelligible in parts. He advises me in these serious times

[1] Refers to Mr. Morley having taken Pitfield—a white house standing on the south side of the Hogsback on the road near Puttenham and midway between Guildford and Farnham.

'to take to political writing.' I reply that it demands special study. He insists that I have only to give my genuine convictions. I admit the novelty in newspaper writing but urge its insufficiency. 'Not at all,' says he. I am to be allowed to produce one vol. novels on Questions of the Day. Morley is quoted as being utterly of his opinion. I propose to him an Opera libretto to popularise the Democratic movement and bring our chief personages before the eyes of the nobility. O—— in love with the Princess L—— meditates the enlèvement of the lady that he may breed Radicals from Royalty: delivers idea in ballad. B——, impressionable to poetry and music, is half won, but checked by religious sentiment:—Ballad—The Waverer.

Fred savagely: 'Good God! How you can spout buffoonery in times like these!'

Pathetic ballad by M. 'In times like these.'

The poor fellow danced with disgust. He is fast assombrissant tout entier.

Your article on Byron admirable: nothing so good yet written of him and from the highest view. I confessed to Fred that if I could write like that I would write more prose. He groaned. He has a private chamber of groans. GEORGE MEREDITH.

PS.—I sent Greenwood a review of an imaginary vol. of poems, 'Armageddon, etc.,' dedicated to Dr. Cumming of Scotland. The wretch posted proofs, but his courage seems to have failed him.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *Dec.* 16, 1871.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—Give my warmest regards to Florrie when you arrive at Heidelberg. I think it

remarkably kind of her to invite you—though I am sure you make your companionship worth having. I shall be delighted to have a letter from Heidelberg. The Odenwald in winter must be fine: not so suggestive of Ossian as a land of crag and mist, but with a grandeur of its own. As to Ossian and Homer, your choice represents a phase of thoughtful youth. Ossian's imagery is intangible. Homer's is all concrete. Homer's comes up from the heart of Nature. Ossian's is somewhat forced, and seems due to a sentimental habit and the imperiousness of sentiment in colouring all of its own hue. The Homeric battles, Councils and speeches are still as fresh as ever owing to the naturalness of the imagery, the vigour of the flow, the manly music of the lines. The death of Patroclus, the grieving of Achilles, are imperishable things; the parting of Hector and Andromache, the elderly Troy looking at Helen and other scenes:—and observe, that all the characters are distinct, painted without effort, but with the sharp outline of life.—Of course you must make allowance for the ancient spirit: and the truth is, the modern tone (under the guise of a weird, primeval, mystical melody and system of verse) is what catches you. I am not at all sorry, and you have good examples—Napoleon was once in love with Ossian. It has the same effect on the young as ruins of castles and abbeys seen by moonlight. The more imaginative and the sensitive are sure to like him best, but there is not a doubt as to which is the greater poet. In fact you are of an age to like the minor song, and not quite to appreciate the great organ-notes. I have known a period when I would rather have been reading Tennyson than Shakespeare: so you see you have an example. I wish I had time to write on.—Your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *March* 21, 1872.

MY DEAR FRED,—All thanks to you for your thoughtfulness about Arthur, into whose future I wish to see a path. But it would be impossible to get him over to compete, with a fair chance, within a couple of months, and I confess I shrink from the idea of his going to China. He is having a good, thorough education, and is observant and interested in European affairs, and to him the East would seem banishment; and for what? There would be little chance of his rising, I apprehend. Don't think me hard to please. I am very anxious about him. Should you have further information in praise of this service, I should like to hear it, but I shudder at the thought of losing sight of the boy altogether.

The behaviour of the House of Commons was filthy. They are at red heat of loyalty, and I am persuaded that men anxious to serve the public would be wiser-minded in timing their motions. Think of it!—after the English have just seen a Republic overthrown by a Monarchy, they are expected to listen with decency to a pair of avowed Republicans!—and their Prince only lately well out of a typhoid bed! It is asking too much of them.

I should have liked to go up to the lecture, but it involved leaving home for a night, and work for a morning, and I am hurrying a new performance. When it is printed send me a copy. I like the headings.

Millicent Maxse!

Hark at it!

Miss Millicent Maxse was fond of her Ma,
And chanted her aristocratic tra-la
In contempt of her stern democratic Papa,
And to spite him she married a Markis—ha! ha!

It won't do. It 's horrid. It dances on the m's hoydenly.

Marie suggests Violet, since you have an Olive. . . . Geraldine is charming. Leila, Gwendolen. Maxse will take anything but Millicent.—Emilia Maxse gets a better accent. Millicent avaunt! It 's a proper parson's wife's name; it overflows with female priggery. You have to lift the nose to enounce it.

I am glad you take to Davis. We have a great regard for her, and know her to be a single-minded brave old woman.—Yours ever, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING, SURREY, ENGLAND, *April* 25, 1872.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,— . . . Strong friendships and inter-communications with foreigners will refresh your life in this island, and the Germans are solid. Stick to a people not at the mercy of their impulses, and besides a people with so fine a literature must be worthy of love.—Captain Maxse wrote to me the other day about an examination in the Foreign Office for the post of Chinese interpreter—for you: if successful to go out to China with a salary of £200 per annum and learn the Chinese tongue of li-ro and fo-ki. I declined it: I hope I was right. I felt sure that it would be repugnant to you to spend your life in China, where the climate is hard, society horrid, life scarcely (to my thought) endurable. Perhaps you might have chosen Japan. But it would have been for very many years perpetual banishment. Let me hear what you think of it.—Study Cicero carefully. He is a fine moralist, a friend of scholars, a splendid trainer for a public life of any serious and exalted ambition.—What you say of our religion is what thoughtful men feel: and that you at the same time can recognise its moral

value, is matter of rejoicing to me. The Christian teaching is sound and good: the ecclesiastical dogma is an instance of the poverty of humanity's mind hitherto, and has often in its hideous fangs and claws shown whence we draw our descent.—Don't think that the obscenities mentioned in the Bible do harm to children. The Bible is outspoken upon facts, and rightly. It is because the world is pruriently and stupidly shamefaced that it cannot come in contact with the Bible without convulsions. I agree with the Frommen that the book should be read out, for Society is a wanton hypocrite, and I would accommodate her in nothing: though for the principle of Society I hold that men should be ready to lay down their lives. Belief in the religion has done and does this good to the young; it floats them through the perilous sensual period when the animal appetites most need control and transmutation. If you have not the belief, set yourself to love virtue by understanding that it is your best guide both as to what is due to others and what is for your positive personal good. If your mind honestly rejects it, you must call on your mind to supply its place from your own resources. Otherwise you will have only half done your work, and that is always mischievous. Pray attend to my words on this subject. You know how Socrates loved Truth. Virtue and Truth are one. Look for the truth in everything, and follow it, and you will then be living justly before God. Let nothing flout your sense of a Supreme Being, and be certain that your understanding wavers whenever you chance to doubt that he leads to good. We grow to good as surely as the plant grows to the light. The school has only to look through history for a scientific assurance of it. And do not lose the habit of praying to the unseen Divinity. Prayer for worldly goods is worse than fruitless, but prayer for strength of soul is that

passion of the soul which catches the gift it seeks.—Your loving father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse.

BOX HILL, *July* 2, 1872.

MY DEAR FRED,—. . . As to the Century Club supper, I thank you. I return you the paper. The Club should not sup until it has deliberated a century before the act. Supping on any occasion is doubtful wisdom, but when you do, it should be like sinning, profuse—a good go in at it, not 'inexpensive.' Really, Fred, what are you coming to! I supped once with a damsel on ale, cheese and onions. And what are you going to commemorate? You are going to make speeches! If there is one thing to make any meal indigestible, it 's spouting. My neighbour's wretched crudities which I 'm to bolt, good Lord!—The lighting of the Aquarium, where one may see the fish that won't come to the plate, is simply barbarous. I am certain it was at your suggestion that wines were excluded. I 'm persuaded too that you 're in error in supposing you belong to this Century, and it 's only by courtesy the fellows of it don't tell you so; it 's the next you belong to, and you will find it out; and you were not made for a Club, but for mankind, so you see you 're wrong all round, and you will be like a member of the Aquarium out of water there. Don't go. Come to me that day.—Your unrefreshed GEORGE M.

PS.—Does this 'Supper' mean 'Dinner' at a reasonable hour?—say. And is there a chance of no Speechification? And might I have time to inspect the Aquarium quietly by coming? And dress anyhow?

To Frederick Greenwood.[1]

Box Hill, *Jan.* 1, 1873.

My dear Greenwood,—Open your heart a minute to receive a greeting of the New Year from me. May you fight as victoriously—bravely you always will—this year as last! May suppressed gout go limping on the other side of the river! May you be touched with the wand of wisdom to throw off your one blindness and see the virtues of my pen as with a flash of revelation!

By the way, I am having some fun in the Graphic, and might by and by turn the Dialogues to good purpose, but I fear the grave commercial men sitting on it won't stand me long. Glance at next number, if it should come under your eye. Do let us meet for an evening this month? Fitzjames Stephen's articles are fine out-hitting and have judicial good sense. They are the prose of Carlyle's doctrines, valuable, profitable, but to me, though I take their smashing force, just not conclusive enough to make me anxious to hear the rejoinder. It is of great importance that what he says should be said. His side of the case has hitherto been woefully dumb —unable to supply an athlete. So bold and able a writer will set a balance. Only guard against a certain sombrely prognosticating tone that he has:—as in the sermon on New Year's Eve. Opposed to the artificial cheerfulness of the Journals, it 's like starlight after pantomime fires. But it gives the Pall Mall by degrees a Mr. Toobad twang.

Some one assured me that George Smith had yielded

[1] Author and journalist; originator and publisher of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. When Yates Thompson purchased this and turned it into a Liberal organ, Greenwood and other members of the staff formed the *St. James's Gazette*. It was Frederick Greenwood who first suggested to Disraeli that purchase of the Suez Canal shares which made England master of that Gate to the East. He subsequently edited the *Anti-jacobin*.

his part in the P. M. to Spottiswoode: not true, I hope?

I have looked at Morris's poem 'Enough for love,'—'Love is enough,' I mean. Have you? I looked away. The look was enough. Our public seems to possess the fearful art of insensibly castrating its favourites. The songs are of the species of Fitzball's Gossamer Tree: charming in melody, but there is no such thing as a gossamer tree. I hope when Swinburne publishes his 'Tristram' you will review him. Take him at his best he is by far the best—finest poet; truest artist—of the young lot—when he refrains from pointing a hand at the genitals. And I trust he has done so this time. I never see him, and have to imagine that he has taken offence—without a formal editorial letter to tell me of it, as in a famous case known to us. All states of life have their privileges, and mine is to be behind the scenes of many illustrious and ringing names, and to laugh. How truly wise is so and so! I hear, and I bow. The aim of the pretenders must be but to have this homage of the public, and who would rob them of it because he happens to be behind them on the stage and peruses a dead blank instead of the pretty picture confronting the pensive? I would run on, but you are a busy man. If we can't meet, I will invite myself to you for the evening. I hope your daughter still improves.—From your loving

George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 12, 1874.

My dear Greenwood,—I should like to review 'Spain and the Spaniards' of Azamar Batuk; and also 'Yu-Pe-Ya's Lute' by Mrs. Webster, if I see stuff in it. Will you leave them out for me? I want work. My poor 'Beauchamp' is not thought good for the market

by George Smith, who is (as he always is) very kind about it.—Your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 22, 1874.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I thank you very much for stepping over the obstruction for our mutual convenience in the matter of 'Beauchamp.' Greenwood and Maxse told me that the work pleased you. I need scarcely assure you that I look upon your appreciation of my labour as a good reward of it. I write for you and men like you. Consequently when the greater paymaster failed me, I hoped the work might be accepted where it would be more suitably accommodated, feeling quite certain that you would allow nothing to stand in the way of your estimation of it on its merits. Your reluctance to undertake the burden of so lengthy a production, I cannot but think reasonable, and I gladly meet your kind proposal that I should cut it short as much as I can, without endangering the arteries. I will get the MS. from George Smith immediately, and do my utmost upon it. It strikes me that the parts to lop will be the letters, a portion of the Visit to Normandy, the heavier of the electioneering passages, introductory paragraphs to chapters, and dialogues passim that may be considered not vital to the central idea. That, which may be stated to be the personal abnegation coming, in spite of errors here and there (and as it were in spite of the man himself), of a noble devotion to politics from the roots up, I think I can retain uninjured—possibly improved by the exclusion of a host of my own reflections. At any rate they can be reprinted subsequently. Chapman will buy the book for the 3 vol. issue. It rests with me that this should be brought about. I will take the liberty to let

you know to what amount, and when, the task of excision has been performed.

My little ones, I am glad to say, are well, and so is my wife, whom I join in sending her compliments and regards to Mrs. Morley.

Let me add that I await the continuation of the essay on Compromise with some impatience.—I am your obliged and faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Moncure D. Conway.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 18, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—I have been away from home, and I regret very much that your letter of the 29th May should have remained unanswered up to this date.

I am engaged in cutting down my novel for the 'Fortnightly Review.' The task is hard, for I have at least to excise a third of my work, which appears to be a full three-vols. measure. Supposing that I accomplish it to the satisfaction of the Editor, the first chapters will be published in the Septr. number, as far as I can calculate. Would it be of use to you to have early serial sheets?

I feel bound to warn you of the nature of my work. It is not likely to please the greater number of readers. Mr. George Smith (of Smith, Elder & Co.) could not take it for the 'Cornhill Magazine.' It is philosophical-political, with no powerful stream of adventure: an attempt to show the forces round a young man of the present day, in England, who would move them, and finds them unutterably solid, though it is seen in the end that he does not altogether fail, has not lived quite in vain. Of course, this is done in the concrete. A certain drama of self-conquest is gone through, for the hero is not perfect. He is born of the upper class, and is scarcely

believed in by any class, except when he vexes his own, and it is then to be hated. At the same time the mild spirit of a prosperous middle class, that is not extremely alarmed, is shown to be above persecuting; so that the unfortunate young man is in danger of being thought dull save by those who can enter his idea of the advancement of Humanity and his passion for it. In this he is a type. And I think his History a picture of the time —taking its mental action, and material ease and indifference, to be a necessary element of the picture.

But I am afraid all this will not sound hopeful to you in the interests of an American publisher, if it should be on behalf of one that you do me the honour to address me.

I find myself writing to you on a matter of business. I am indebted to your lectures for support, and have often wished to thank you for them. I beg you to pardon the liberty I take in doing so.—I am, dear sir, yours most faithfully, George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 14, 1874.

My dear Morley,—Since you are inclined generously to trust to me to cut the Novel short, I promise you that it shall be done to your satisfaction, as to quantity. The 'mutilation' does me no hurt; but hitherto I have merely looked at it to see that it could be done;—but with shudders to think how much more there was to do! The central portion, I fear, must be cut to pieces, condensed, re-written.—I would have begun upon the MS. immediately; but Chapman had given me to suppose that you were very anxious for space for critical and attractive articles.—I fancied there was no hurry.—Today I post 3 chapters, which I fancy will come within the pages you number for me. The excisions are not

so numerous here as they will be subsequently to the Venetian scenes. These also I shall be able to cut down a little. Remember that I despatch the sheets to Virtue because it is your wish: I am not anxious to begin.—I will try my hand at a paragraph or two of Prologue. I see that it is wanted. It is difficult. If I had but temporary command of your style I should not fear.

The latest portion 'On Compromise' is very good indeed.—Are the instances a trifle over-familiar for the dignity of the Essay? They at least give your meaning clearly and bring them home—are likely to do downright service. For that purpose it will not do to stand much aloof—among the sons of Hengist. I have just returned from Uckfield, where his descendants are in the majority, though they would assume Horsa to be his wife.—Morison's 'Impossible French Republic' strikes one as overwhelmingly true—as it is powerful.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *July* 23, 1874.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I find I can say better what should be said of Beauchamp in a paragraph at the head of the 4th chapter—I am very shy of prefaces, and by introducing my one or two remarks incidentally I hope to escape from a tone that seems to avoid the apology only by some loftiness—or the reverse. I am afraid it would not be I who could put the intermediate touch. Conception rarely fails me, though ability does, and I can barely conceive of its being done in the proper tone.—I own that you might do it for one of your own works: but for a piece of fiction having a serious aim, and before a public that scorns the serious in fiction, and whose wits are chiefly trained to detect pretension, it is more than commonly difficult.

I will take care that Virtue prints the next chapter early, so that, if you will be so good as to offer it, I may have your counsel anent the paragraph.

Did I speak to you of Morison's article? It abounded in cleverness: it threw me over and silenced me:—but is it just to be writing so decisively unhopefully? Many of his illustrations are excellent. It is at any rate admirable journalism.—I am, yours very faithfully,

George Meredith.

To Captain Maxse.

Box Hill, *August* 5, 1874.

My dear Fred,—Probably you are in strong sunshine. Here we have a chilly day, a shrouded sky, half a suspicion of light now and then, a bit of a breeze that has puffed spasmodic life into the yachts at Cowes, and shakes the rain from our junipers. The fine weather has become a Christian penitent, and makes everybody unhappy around her.—How I long to be with you! I am afraid that the doing of justice to Beauchamp and other work I have will nail me down (a coffiny phrase!), or rather, I am fearing it, for I still look forward with a bit of hope.

On Sunday White arrived, in attendance upon Mr. Jacob Homburg,[1] of whom we are all very fond. He is a nice little fellow with an addiction to hunting rabbits, that I must cure him of, and a passion for the kitchen, due to the soft influences of your cook, probably incurable. Already he has taken to his new home, follows me well and seems to like his quarters. The exception to his good conduct is, that he refuses biscuit and thinks of standing out for meat pure and simple.

You have seen the papers and meditated upon the Beecher-Tilton scandal. Guilty or not, there is a sickly snuffiness about the religious fry that makes the tale of

[1] A dachshound, the gift of Captain Maxse.

their fornications and adulteries absolutely repulsive to read of, and but for the feeding of the reptile sarcasm in our bosoms, it would disgust one more than a chronicle of the amours of costermongers.

If Austria permits to you the 'Fortnightly,' you will have seen that Beauchamp has made a start. It is a singularly fine number.

Do you know I have a great liking for being in Austria, and if I come I would propose a route something like this: to be at Nuremberg about the 22nd (I cannot be off before the 20th): to proceed to Ratisbon, and by steamer to Linz and Passau: thence quickly to the Salzkammergut, and by any route you like to Tyrol and Lienz, for a few days among the dolomites' valleys: then by rail to Verona and by the North Italian lakes homeward anyhow.—Would such a scheme please you, with some small amount of knapsack walking? Tell me. For walking is the thing I must have, or it will be waste of time and money for me. Up at four A.M., a walk to breakfast, a walk to dinner, a stroll, and then early to the couch.—Latterly I have been rising here at half-past five, and have enjoyed the tonic morning air immensely, yet more the fresh loveliness of the downs and fields, the velvet shadows, sharp and thin, and the exquisite sky. This morning there was little of that, however. The weather seems to be making up for the jolly squalls and the gale we had crossing to Cherbourg once. Changes have come since then! Where 's the Susan? Where 's the Grebe?—By the way, Betty Vulliamy would like to know whether you are a Good Templar, and if not whether you are willing to become one. I don't know the nature of the rites of initiation.

So spins the world away.—I would not have you write, because it 's better for your health's sake that you should not; but you may jot down what you think of my plan

of a tour, or what your proposition is: and what, supposing we do not meet upon the date you name, your aim is likely to be. Whither you will go, and for how long, and which way homeward.—I have not abandoned the prospect of meeting you somewhere: but at this instant (and it is the reason why I did not write to you by return of post) I do not see my way out of the encircling whirr of work.—Marie and I rejoice that you should be feeling better and condescending to repose—a good sign of itself.

Adieu, my dear Fred. Write soon and I will reply. Tell me your scheme. I will come if I can, and meet you, if it doesn't preclude walking somewhat. Nuremberg I have never seen and much want to. By what date is it imperative for you to be in England?—Your loving

George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *August* 10, 1874.

My dear Morley,—Pardon me if I have been causing anxiety to the Editorial bosom. Each day that I keep back my MS. I feel capable of cutting out more and more; and for the present number the more the better, for it will be as well to get over the Venetian scenes in this number as nearly as possible—according to the amount of space you can give me. The chapters are short.—You will see that the 2nd para. of Chapter 4 is composed of the prefatory observations. I am quite ready to defer to your judgment if you object to them, or to the way in which they are done.—To-morrow morning I send several chapters on to Virtue from Chapman's, and very shortly you shall have a vol. in advance.—I need hardly say how glad I am that you approve of it so far. Maxse writes from Carlsbad that he thinks the beginning 'excellent,' but the public and press may think differently.

For your sake as well as mine I hope not. M. confesses to feeling very much improved in tone. He wishes me to meet him at the Bel Alp on the 20th. I do not see that it is possible. I have the restless feeling for the mountains as actively as ever, but neither time nor purse.—Morison should be coming to me for a day or two, and if he does not I shall fear that things are going ill at Pitfield. The conclusion of 'Compromise' gives me a bold, healthful, high-reaching Essay, practically a guide to turn to when the heart is weaker than the eye is blind. If, either owing to the casuistry pertaining to the subject, or to the desire for directly applying your meaning, you have missed the philosophical altitudes you love better (I understand Morison to hint at this), you have at least said what no one else dares or can say. I shall re-read it:—Let me add that now and then I have thought you less careful in your style than commonly. It has the good swing, but there are dissonances. That is little, but there are at the same time phrases running with sentences that are cast in a tone too purely argumentative for that proper to the essay: showing as it were the want of absolute compression of your own thought in awaiting the objections of an opponent, double-stating it.—I do not quarrel with what I like well, but what I like I wish to see perfect, and I am sure you will overlook a critical habit in me.—Your most faithful

George Meredith.

To Captain Maxse.

Box Hill, *August* 10, 1874.

My dear Fred,—Hail, rain, thunder, lightning:—have you anything like this at Carlsbad? This is our daily entertainment, and I don't dislike it, for it gives fine scenery.—I am glad you like the opening of 'Beau-

champ.' I am at work cutting down, which will necessitate some amount of fresh writing. Chapman urges me for copy, so that he may have an advance lot to forward to America for pay, otherwise he won't get the same, so I am bound to go on with my work, and that fact, besides considerations of the purse, seems to forewarn me I am doomed to remain in harness. I fear so. I cannot say at present, but the outlook is bad. I may be able in Sept. to accomplish a cheap trip of a fortnight to my wife's sister in Dauphiny, for a breath of mountain air. Switzerland gets dim as Leith Hill behind the raincloud. —It is an immense relief and joy to me to think of the chance of your recovery. Perhaps the waters do something, but the seclusion from work and nervous worry is the main secret, I fancy. Next year, if things are favourable with me, I might try Carlsbad myself. Obtain the best general information as to the waters, and let me know how they operate.—By the way, have you read Swinburne's 'Bothwell'? I am afraid it 's going to be allowed to sink because of its size; and no doubt there is too much of it, but you at least are one of those who should read and support it.—Morley finishes 'Compromise,' very good and bold work that cannot but be beneficial. I presume that Morison on the 'Prospects of the Republic in France' did not please you. The Positivists, he tells me, are howling still. It was well written. I am afraid it contains more truth than we care to admit, though none can deny to Gambetta very honourable leadership of late. I have seen one 'Lanterne.' Hum. And read Rochefort's Fortnightly Article. Have you? Poor stuff.—We want from him an orderly narrative done in a certain grave pitch of tone, not carping criticisms of other men's work.

I hope to be hearing from you to-morrow, when I may have something to reply to, so I will hold this from the

post for 24 hours. Jacob sits at my feet, and is my constant companion—a dear little fellow.

Aug. 11.—Your letter just come: You have not yet received mine dated the 4th, and to which I calculated getting yours of this morning for an answer.—Adieu. I will write again.—Your loving GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

BOX HILL, *August* 15, 1874.

MY DEAR FRED,—I write so that you may not be disappointed of a letter at Meyringen, and good morning to you on your way to the Bel Alp! I am finishing a Poem, 'The Nuptials of Attila'—about forty pages: Jacob at my foot, an accustomed pigeon on the window-sill, bees below humming over some droppings of honeycomb just taken from them. This is pastoral and should content me, yet I wish I were with you, in sight of the Alps. Zürich I don't much care for, yet to be at Zürich would enrapture me.—Why should you return!—Now I look at my pigeon fronting me, I remark that he is amazingly like a parson. He is on one leg, asleep, his beak in breast, all his feathers oddly ruffled to swell his size, and an eye turned on me like the eye of Falstaff heeling over with excess of Sherris. Say, a Bishop. When I was staying with my wife's sister last June we dined one evening with the rector of the place. He said to me: 'Do you think it true that there is a portrait of Jesus Christ extant?'—'Of Nazareth?' said I. He blinked faintly like my sleepy pigeon. 'Certainly of Nazareth.'—'Oh! no, then,' said I. 'But it is affirmed that there is an authentic portrait of the Virgin his Mother.' 'Could one trust it?' he asked me with a supplication in the tone. 'Decidedly not,' said I. He was (to make use of one of

their distinctions) High Church. One may be high and not see far. And now good-night, Fred. Write from Bel Alp.—Where you also will be high and not see so far as me, I dare say.—Your envious GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 3, 1874.

MY DEAR FRED,—I am reminded by Jacob von Homburg that you pass through Geneva on the 5th, and there is just time for me to despatch you a greeting. I know the disappointment of not getting a letter when one calls at a foreign post office.—Wind S.E. with rain. For a week we have had fine S.W. skies: yesterday was quite wonderful with scaling clouds. I went up the hill with Will and his mother and sister (Jacob of course) and we flew a kite and dreamed. It was on the whole as good as Switzerland while it lasted, but it was not the shaking up of Alpine walks and the freshening of mountain air. This is what I want and find I certainly can't get before next year. The more I look at Beauchamp the more I see that the work must be almost redone—at least to suit my taste.—Tyndall's Belfast address you have seen, no doubt. It has roused the Clergy, Fred. *They* warned away from science? *They* excluded from the chief works of God and told to confine themselves to the field of the emotions! They affirm that Tyndall is an atheist, and would dare to say he is already damned if the age were in a mood to hear that language. The man or the country that fights priestcraft and priests is to my mind striking deeper for freedom than can be struck anywhere at present. I foresee a perilous struggle with them. So far I am heartily with Bismarck.—I want you to note for me what sort of weather you have had on the days when I recorded our weather here. I am noting as far

as I can the general prevalence of the S. Westers at this period. Septr. is commonly a fine Swiss month; whether it shares our luck at all is what I want to learn. France, I find, has usually our weather in Spring, and not in Autumn.—I shall see you soon. The folly of your coming back affects me strangely. Necessity would have to pull hard to fetch me to these shores, had I choice of Switzerland or Italy. Write when you return—and come here.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 19, 1874.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I gave you your 'month of freedom from editorial cares,' thinking it might be wanted for a holiday on tough desk-work, then fearing that a personal affliction, to which I could not minister, urged you to keep aloof. I am very glad to have your letter. When Maxse saw you before you started he thought you were looking ruddily well—chubbily: so writing at least agrees with you. Yours is the better way. Public life, if only one can keep up to the mark of it, and know when to abandon it, is the wholesomest. You get most wisdom out of it: and it is the only path to follow to know oneself. Hermit philosophers are soon seen following the fancy as much as infants, but it is not so pretty a fancy.—I assume that objections are not yet raised against Beauchamp, because I have not yet had a sneer from Chapman. As far as I have seen, the Weekly Commentators are disposed to leave it alone, and I would rather have them do so.—Absolute re-writing I find to be my lamentable task for the whole of it!

The Essay on Compromise was put in my hands the other day in Piccadilly. I hold it a brave good book to take counsel with. The work on 'Supernatural Religion'

comes in the way of my re-reading it immediately—thanks to your article, and another (yours, it struck me) in the Pall Mall—I feel to the writer as we used to towards our big boy champion against the bullies at school: that is, I admire, believe in him, feel that it is my fight, but can aid only very little—by gesticulation chiefly. He is a splendid fellow. Hitherto we have pined for one who should unite profound scholarship and cunning of fence. I like his unhasting equability of tone. I am near the end of the 1st volume, and long to get to the summing up.—You did well by 'Bothwell' in 'Macmillan.' I spoke of the article to the more than Scotchman, his partner[1]—the coarser bran or pure porridge Scotchman. 'Hegh, don't ye know the writer of it?' said he, and scotched your name.—The other night I saw Irving in Hamlet, a great pleasure that I should like to hear of your having. He listened to my criticism next day, and no doubt I thought the better of his Hamlet afterwards, but it is good acting. . . .—Your ever faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

I remember—I had certain things to say of Mill upon 'Nature,' but must defer it. I rejoice that you speak with regret of the weak spot elsewhere.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, Last Day of '74.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—Though you are rapidly becoming insubstantial to me as well as elusive, like the very spark in the burnt sheet of my rejected manuscript, I believe in you still and will wish New Year's happiness to an Editor so deep in his retirement as to be but the animating spirit of a newspaper. Do you ever think of

[1] George Lillie Craik.

me? Ever imagine how much an hour of you calls me up? Do you read a bit of Beauchamp? I have a portion of it under me to compress and rekindle, and words can't say what a dole of criticism from you (with an interjection or two on the right side) would do to animate the finish. Do you lunch at the Garrick? Sometimes I see you glowing through the bars of the Pall Mall, roguish as Holbein's Harry 8th Jester at Hampton Court, or awful as Eblis with the fire at his heart. But I see you only in brilliant dots, like a score of devil's music played to a dyspeptic at night, to haunt him for the remainder of his term, integral no more.

Let nonsense be no more. Men grow grave, Editors most of all. I am troubled about various outlooks for the country, and do hope you will be at work on the subject of a conscription—your own subject years back. Our stiff-necked people must pass under this yoke.

Some day I shall call for a talk of five minutes. Meantime I salute you with all my heart.

To Captain Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 13, 1875.

MY DEAREST FRED,—Your letter struck like a shaft of sunlight into my bath yesterday morning, and the contents appear to me very good. Movement and bracing air—these are the specifics. I have such a vision of your pinewoods that they will henceforth be one of my points of attraction. How delightful to roam through them with your boys!—I assume that the little chaps picked up at once on landing.

Our frost broke up the night you started, and a rising wind made me think of you.

I doubt if there will be any fresh matter this month; Morley gave only two chapters last month. No doubt

you will be back with the boys for their schooling before the further proofs require attention; but I shall hear from you and the proofs shall fly to you wherever you are.—Did you see in the 'Times' a letter of a delicious Bishop reproving Auberon Herbert upon the subject of Prayer: Assuring us, in large type, that God answers it, upon the example of the human physician to whom we cry for aid, and are answered. The proof of a spiritual response from the instance of the material one is finely episcopal. The 'Times' printed no reply to my Lord Bishop.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Jones.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 23, 1875.

MY DEAR JONES,—It's I who am the delinquent: Marie will not touch the pen to tell it. The truth is, I am so tied down to work at this period that I cannot hope to spare two days for pleasure before the end of February. Blame, but pity me, and that will bring you round to the right feeling. Besides, our Babsie is only just flinging off a catarrh, and I feel threatened with it, yet must drive my quill.

Consider, however, you, that the Birthdays occur on the 10th and 12th of next month. Will you come on the 10th to celebrate Marie's? Once you did. Be that admirable man and wife again! You will make us happy. And then can be settled the time of our visit to you. I have long been wishing to see you and make you know my sympathy for you in the blows that have struck you heavily through the year. They have been a grief to us, believe me.

I do hope you will come on the 10th. Write to me pardoning me and heaping anthracite on my head (a costly matter in these days) by the promise that in spite

of my breaches of faith you can be generous. Willie will be so happy to see Ethel. He shall have a holiday for that day. Give my warmest regards to Mrs. Jones —dashed by no cynicism of your own: and to Miss Jones: and my love to Bright-hair.—Your faithfullest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *April* 12, 1875.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Your letter written at Trier was a delightful surprise to me. On the Sunday following we imagined you at Rheims, gave you to the Sainted Joan for an hour, compared the wheels of your mind with the ceremonials of the Cathedral, and finally deposited you in Paris, where for your good health I trust you may even still be. I am anxious to see you here, but this weather allows of no forecast of when. Let me hear of your return. It would (weather permitting and your work) be pleasant to have your appreciation of some of the upper Frenchmen while it is new. I feel like the one who 'ploughs with pain his native lea.' I go nowhere, see, hear, know nothing.—Yes, I went to see Salvini on Friday. Saturday gave the newspaper criticism, and after observing the true and only Othello, you should have read them! Faint, prim, puling exceptions to this and that: Like political England they want peace—not to be disturbed. They harp on Othello's 'Tenderness.' Do you perceive much of it in reading the play?—one of the finest in action of Shakespeare, lowest of the great plays in conception.—Yours ever warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *June* 29, 1875.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Most foul! But postponements, as you justly remind me, destroy the integrity of men,

and the ruins of our appointment fall in a heap on the next, and down we shall go into the dark and unknown vast if we do not lay tight hold of the nearest branch, and swear—

All or nothing! I can't endure your coming for only a night and two bits of days: a Thursday without head and a Friday without bottom. Tell me that though all London should crave for you open-mouthed, you come on Wednesday week, not to leave us at least before Friday. But don't be due anywhere till that week is done.

Come on Wednesday in time for a French breakfast in the garden about ¼ past 11. You have no idea how nice it is. We tried it on Sunday with three good men and an ancient Hock, and I assure you, that staid and formal day danced to its end like an ecclesiastic that has received the promise of a bishopric. Say, then, Wednesday week, and here before ½ past 11. Haply we shall have majestic July weather. Write, bind thyself. From me and mine to you and yours all sweet greetings!—Yours,

George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *July* 1, 1875.

My dear Morley,—We stipulate for you, that we are not to expect you in soaking weather.

Because (and here lies the sting of it, only to be obliterated by our welcome of you) you come so rarely that we are anxious to make a great occasion of it: great, not grand, and much radiancy is required of the heavens when that you do come. Therefore should July continue to squeeze a sponge, again postpone. But if it promises fair on Tuesday, tell me at what early hour (writing on Tuesday, with a calculating eye aloft) I may go to the Station to meet you and bring you to

The Breakfast.

I wish I knew of conversible fellows to ask to meet you. One can meet, I am told, remarkable characters, but the speechful, the reciprocating, the sunny and unpresumptuous, who speak from the healthy breast of that dear Mother of us, the Moment,—where are they to be found?

I have looked, I forgot to tell you, at Tennyson's 'Queen Mary,' and I had great pleasure of my reading. I saw no trace of power, but the stateliness, the fine tone, the high tone, of some passages, hit me hard. Curiously too, in him, the prose is crisp, salient, excellent. The Songs, if we had not Shakespeare's to show what are not literary forcings to catch a theme to point a comparison, would do. As it is, 'Milking the cow' smells of milking the brain. Mary's 'Low-low' is an instance of public consciousness—before Victoria's people.—But the work seems to me to be good, and how glad I am to have it of him!—Your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *August* 12, 1875.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I must write now, though I have little time to give a faint sketch of what I have to say of 'Rousseau.' It has moved me as few books have done. I had but a poor knowledge, from never having read a compact history of this period when Wit, Science and Sentiment contended, and the latter, which was to fade before the other two, struck an unsound Age with the ring of the ultimate Truth. Rousseau was the very key-note.—You have handled him with consummate mastery: and none can know the trial you have sustained better than he who as I do penetrates to the man, hating this in him, warming to that, alternately, incessantly. But here is one of the most curious and one of the grandest problems of humanity, which you have

handled perfectly. How unjust I was to the printed portion in the 'Fortnightly'! Or may one be pardoned for not having seen the fulness of the work there? I did not discredit you for style (excepting a point or two), but exactly for that which I find in the book—mastery of every note of that evasive heart, and a power of showing the Heroic coward complete in his contradictions. To my mind it is—and it will be to me—one of the most precious of studies. It is one of the wisest of books. For such is the nature of Rousseau that his notes are the deepest and highest within the scale of philosophy, and the very lowest. But (with an exception or two to be named when I meet you, and soon, and here, I hope) you touch all equably, delicately, fillingly, with volume where needful.—I cannot exhaust my admiration. I am at times electrified by companion ideas of my own.—To me the study has a charm that flings off monotony. Speaking critically for the multitude (in the manner of modern criticism) monotony is a character of the subject and the book: wherefore it has not been popular. And with reviewers 3 things present and one absent were required: Competency of knowledge, quick sympathy for the shifting marvellous creature your theme, a comprehension of the mystery of what we are—and no prejudice. The little g for G was turned on you heavily.—But such a fate befalling a book like this should be consolation, as to rewards for value, to novelists and pigmies.

Can you by chance come to us next week? It will delight me infinitely. I have to talk over Rousseau with you, much to say. I made no marks, but I will at whiles, and meantime I remember enough to occupy us.—Your faithfullest GEORGE MEREDITH.

Mr. John Dennis tells how, sitting in the Garrick Club in the early hours of the morning, Meredith told him he had

composed an address to Carlyle on his eightieth birthday. This he wrote down and gave to Mr. Dennis.

To Carlyle

Garrick Club.

This eightieth year of thine sits crowned in light
To lift our England from her fleshly mire:
Two generations view thee as a fire
Whence they have drawn what burns in them most bright:
For thou hast bared the roots of life with sight
Piercing; in language stronger than the lyre:
And thou hast shown the way must man aspire,
Is through the old sweat and anguish Adamite,
As at the first. Unsweet might seem his fate.
Sole with a spade between the stars of earth!—
Giving much labour for his little mirth,
And soldier-service till he fail to strike:
But such thine was, and thine to contemplate
Shall quicken young ambition for the like.

George M.

To Miss Alice Brandreth.[1]

Box Hill, *Feb.* 11, 1876.

Wife being absent, I could find
Nought to say to Rosalind.
She returns, and swift as wind
Now I write to Rosalind.
—Your Orlando, reared as hind,
Was fit mate for Rosalind.
(When his manners were refined)
He had youth like Rosalind.

[1] In reply to an invitation from her to read the part of Bassanio in the *Merchant of Venice*. See footnote (2) page 264.

—Shall a man in grey declined
Seem the same for Rosalind ?
Yea, though merely aged in rind.
Is he worthy Rosalind ?
This in grave debate should bind
Parliaments and Rosalind.
—Still if captious, wayward, blind,
And the rest of 't, Rosalind
Should insist,—if to her mind
(If she have one) Rosalind
Thinks me (if to thought inclined
Ever), I with Rosalind
(And I say it, having dined,
Slept and dreamed of Rosalind)
I will do my best ; and kind
Prove our audience, Rosalind !
Take these words for treaty signed
—No Orlando, Rosalind !
But a man with wrinkles lined,
Vows to read with Rosalind.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, *March* 9, 1876.

My dear Greenwood,—Don't laugh at my simplicity : I 'm treating you as if you really meant to come. And who knows ? Faith has been rewarded and unfaith astounded before now. We have a fine South-Wester blowing, likely to hold on for some days. Will you come this Saturday early ?—or will it hit you better to appoint the next ? I have written it, you see, with the lovely gravity I can assume. Still, if you do come I shall celebrate the event and make a date of it. Jupiter, they say, in his Godly irony grants mortals their wishes. I don't believe in the irony, but I do in accidents, and that

now and then a loaf tumbles out of Jupiter's bread basket. O tumble, come! I've a great appetite for you.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *March* 28, 1876.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—For some time I have been entertaining myself with the notion that you went with the Governor-General to Rome and Naples, and so could not give me a chance of seeing you here. You partly proposed for February! Will there be a likelihood of it in April? You know the pleasure and refreshment it is to me.—I am busy, idly busy with verse: unable to let go forth that which ought not to have so much time wasted on it, therefore discontented with the work and myself. Your voice would brace me. What is it occupies you? Hard work, if you have not been absent, but what kind of work? I am particularly curious to read you this month, on the question of Empress, and as to how you interpret Disraeli's speeches. Is it a genial contempt for the House, or dotage? does he laugh at the gentiles, or but flounder before them? I fancy the answer to be that he is heartily sick of the task his Imperial mistress imposed on him at a moment when he did not know the English people so well.

For the rest Radicalism will have nothing to regret in the passing of the Bill.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *April* 12, 1876.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—The essay on Macaulay is masterly, perfectly balanced, clear, sound, delightful with apt expression in the delivery of a just sentence. I find this fault: I do not think it right that you should 'stumble'

on the quotation concerning Tickell and Addison, wherewith to oppose Macaulay to Southey, when you have just given the latter at his best. We all go with you in your verdict, only in a literary sense we feel that you are below your own mark here for an instant.—Of course you are not comparing him with Southey, but casting light on his style from the first lamp to hand. All the more however does it seem to me that you should in such a case be careful of your selection of an example, which you may well cry horror and thrice horror upon, as it stands where you have placed it, and which is yet inoffensive enough in its natural place. Nay, here I should defend the style of Macaulay, on whom I see the advocate's wig while I hear him thumping excusably in the advocate's manner to defend those two. Detestable as is the iterated blow on 'villany,' it is only so as old Bailey eloquence is so, and appears to be vehement with the good object of wresting life or character from a stupid Jury. But if you had apposed some description of William or Luxembourg or Marlborough, I should have been better satisfied.—On this point I feel so sure, that I am anxious you should consider about it before you republish the essay. And I will not ask pardon of a great writer and student for drawing attention to what looks but little.

A minor defect, of a kind that I will direct your eye to in Rousseau, is at 'blaze and glare,' or amplification in language which is not an extension of the idea or fortification of the image. There will be a glare if there is a blaze, but that is nothing compared with the twice insisted-upon harshness of sound, in consideration that it is not necessary twice.—So fair is your work to me that I am persecuted by such generally imperceptible specks on it.

Enclosed is a poem of 3 verses for the 'Fortnightly,'

if you think it worthy.[1] If you can find the Sonnet to Carlyle I shall be glad : I am not sure of my memory.—Ever your faithfullest GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Brandreth.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
April 13, 1876.

DEAR MRS. BRANDRETH,— . . . Please to ask my dear Beatrice—Rosalind—Katherine that I bear in mind the scheme of writing a play for her. Also she should in loyalty be informed that the Professor [2] has been largely corresponding with me. He starts (so was the latest announcement) on the 15th and threatens that when at Baltimore he will bring his whole mathematical force to bear upon the Governors of the Hopkins University to make them invite me with honours to act as his colleague in the shape of lecturer on Poetry and Rhetoric. Thus you see he will insist on having one of us ; I have lived near to the Rose, so am sweet to him.—I beg to be remembered to Mr. Brandreth and Katherine, and I am ever your most faithful and devoted

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *August* 15, 1876.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Receive my thanks for the bag of golden grain. I am chained here for a time : in a few days I take Will to Pitfield [3] to find comrades with the boy and girls there, previous to his departure to school. Perhaps (for the truth is known to you, so I may as well confess it : the 'harvesters' are terrific : I am spotted

[1] 'A Ballad of Past Meridian.'

[2] Professor Sylvester, the eminent mathematician, who took part in many Shakespeare readings at Mrs. Brandreth's and had printed verses of several hundreds of rhymes to Rosalind.

[3] James Cotter Morison at this time had Pitfield.

red mounds, I smile disdainfully at the voluptuousness that is not largely composed of scratching: I am raw: therefore there can be no chance of seeing you here before October) perhaps, then, I might come to you for a day on my way to Hawkhurst, if I go there; and there is some thought of it. No mountains for me this year. But the talk I get with you is mountain atmosphere to the soul.—I have read your 'Robespierre.' It sent me to Carlyle. He bears the re-reading. Still that kind of thing will not do. It is our only History of the French Revolution, and is in as much disorder as the Paris of Danton. Evidently this is your work to be done.—Have you not trimmed your style? The sentences are more compressed, not at such stretch. The 'picturing' of Robespierre seems to me the best that could be done in prose; sober, acute: the mind being all round him while the finger is upon him. You do not condemn, do not apologise for him, you explain him: and also the time. The critical and the narrative power now go well hand in hand. A little further predominance to the latter, will make yours the finest of historical styles: and as there cannot be a theme more spacious to imagination than the French Revolution, I commend you to it for a few years to come. I wish it lay as clear before me, as open to my capacity.—I shall be glad of the 2nd Part of your study.—Harrison has written to me of a mid-way meeting for a walk; and written again, fearful of Phœbus' beams. I am more fearful of rousing the ire of the God by appearing to shun them; I climb the hills of mint and thyme, and can compare myself only to the Leg of Mutton stewing in herbs à sept heures. To say I sweat is to say an angel is holy. I am transfigured in my original elements—fire and water.—I won't talk of the East: I should run to the length of 2 leaders. I am compelled to be quite against my instincts. I

cannot think very much of the Servians. As to Christian against Turk;—to talk in old Tory fashion, the Turk's religion is that of a gentleman by comparison. The Christian is intended to be Russia's catspaw. Yet of course one sees that a nation cancered by the Hareem must be extinguished: it cannot live when it has ceased to live in camp and takes to the Hareem for a diversion. Where women are women but for the bed, there is dissolution, brain and heart paralysis.—Yes, Beaconsfield!—You were wonderfully good in allowing my ballad[1] to run to that length: I was ashamed, and yet I had to exercise restraint to keep back more verses. I will not press you, but you shall tell me if you are inclined to have other samples of my stores; and if not, be sure I cannot take offence.—One who would fain see you again—Oswald Crawfurd—asked warmly of you the other day. I heard of a lady who wanted to fortify herself in her manner of educating a son and bought 'Compromise,' which strengthened her. This laurel to you—a prouder than poet's! Adieu. I wish it were this evening or to-morrow we were to meet!

To Miss Alice Brandreth.

Box Hill, *August* 20, 1876.

My dear Miss Brandreth,—This is to send you on your way with the assurances that we poor abandoned souls look for your return[2]—with the boots of Kazan! (large sized feet). The spelling of your letter shows carefulness. But what do you mean by 'sitting, nor taking in much beside the rhythm'? Do you mean, in addition to? or next neighbour to? I am sure you enjoy that heavenly delight of young London ladies in solitude,

[1] 'A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt.'

[2] Miss Alice Brandreth was starting with her mother and father for Russia, Mr. Brandreth being one of the English delegates at the Oriental Congress held in St. Petersburg in September 1876.

which consists in the poetic contemplation of themselves as looked on by the eternal hills: and to think you incapable of this exquisite reverie is to be unjust to you.—One topic of a serious letter to you would be the fate of those Russian Professors: for it has been remarked of you, that the professor is your natural prey; that you cannot but make him incandescent, and are almost irresponsible in the fatality you exercise. But to say this much is to elevate and dignify you at the cost of your immortal nature. Wherefore I would adjure you (since these sclavic professors are desperate men) to commence your conversation with them by asking each: 'Do you keep pistols and powder?' smiling as you ask it, and speaking with that artlessness which has done for every man Jack of a professor in old England. Should they wish to know why you ask, explain to them of course that you are anxious for their brains.

As to the Drama: it is ill-conceived as yet. I have been very busy: what I want is to lie fallow for a week, and I can't see the week. Pecks of poetry have been coming from me. However I will bear in mind that you wish the thing done.—May fair weather attend you! I desire you to present my compliments to your father and mother, and tell them, I pray, that my vows are most heartily offered for the comfort of their journey, and against the prediction that the drift of the Oriental Congress will be to Constantinople. Adieu: my wife would send the warmest messages were she presiding over this pen.—Your faithfullest GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Sept.* 8, 1876.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—We must by the nature of the case be fixtures in the Hat-box. My pavilion[1] is in course

[1] The chalet in the garden.

of edification to receive me. But hear my proposal: There is an old farm-house, long-windowed, red-bricked, Elizabethan, just far enough from us to ensure you the sense of solitude, near enough to make it possible to meet: South-west of Dorking: between the chalk hills and the sand, set in lovely rolling country: with the moral attraction to you that George Eliot has resided there; backed by a pinewood that was sown by Heaven's hand for contemplation's mood: and this used to be let for 4 guineas per week. Shall I walk to it and see if it is open? Or better, will you come down and visit it with me? It is about 2½ miles from Dorking on the road to Guildford. I think this a most excellent proposal.—Let me add that our cottage would be for you at any price, were it at all in our plans to move.—I shall hope to hear from you. Harrison was here yesterday. We are of one mind in admiration of 'Robespierre.' But he thinks you are almost too scathing of Disraeli.—Your faithfullest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Sept.* 13, 1876.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—There is no moving Marie: here she must wait, and sorely against her wish. We have no wishes left, but are the instruments of fate.

The more to confound me, the Rookery Farm is let up to the end of October.

To-morrow I take our dear old Will to his first taste of School—at Ewell, under a certain Dr. Behr, one time a master at Winchester, well recommended to me; and I like the look of the establishment.—This reminds me, Mrs. Harrison told me it was the Admiral's Mr. Lake, the 'free-thinking' schoolmaster of his boys, who wrote in the 'Spectator' concerning you. Ahem.—Behr simply

assures me that no more than the common doses of theology will be given, and with that I must be satisfied. I do not think it well to be howking about the beds where younkers grow, to clip their roots and precipitate the natural acerbities in any given direction. Young sceptics will hardly avoid being young cynics. I burn for converse with you.—Very busy with poems.—Your ever faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Miss Alice Brandreth.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 3, 1876.

MY DEAR MISS BRANDRETH,—I know Palgrave Simpson,—am very fond of him, and believe he will do anything for me, until he knows you, when he will be subject to a new allegiance. If you and I do not clash, therefore, you may count on him. I will see him or write to him. He is of ripe age, turned of 70, very handsome, and with a consuming passion for the stage; and the dear heart of him so frankly nourishable by flattery that he will open his mouth and shut his eyes and take it in a ladle, so he will exactly suit you.

How I do dislike (in the abstract) men of a certain age who pretend to refuse their spoonful, and all the while their honest old lips are dribbling at the corners: as to the coming to town, let me come on the Thursday of the week after the one your Mother suggests: and go on Friday. One night of London. And besides I am very busy and shall get no work done for next year if I cease to lash myself, and I am disturbed about my lecture[1] and doubt if it will please. If you are moved to do kindness, have my wife the day before I come and whisk her away to music or the play. For my part I don't like to leave my baby gal alone in the house for

[1] 'On the Idea of Comedy.'

more than one night—one does not matter. My wife will write to your mother. I beg you to remember me warmly to your father and Mother both, and believe me for life your devoted servant and lord,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Brandreth.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 14, 1876.

DEAR MRS. BRANDRETH,—To sit with you all three and hear of your tour and of the long leashes of the Russian Professors reduced by Miss Brandreth to a state of spiritual serfage, would be delightful, and what I have hoped for: but so it chances, I am under plight of promise to go to Brighton to my friend Mr. Morley on Thursday, and this involves Friday.—I think Miss —— ought to be informed that our poor sample of a Professor the grey —— prodigious in rhyming power, returned to England during her absence—alas! for him—and was seen at the Athenæum. I am told that he did not remain long—as why should the unhappy man, the sun being as distant and veiled as in the Black Season at the North Pole.

I hear from Eva that Miss Brandreth will make an entry into our valley some time this month. How grand it would have been in the Boots of Kazan! But in any form it will be a wonderful refreshment to us. Please to give my very warm regards to Mr. Brandreth, and my cordial salutes to my Katherine (tamed), and believe me your most faithful and devoted GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

Saturday.

DEAREST M.,—One line. All went well.[1] Morison in one of his enthusiasms—which make one remember

[1] A lecture, 'On the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit,' delivered at the London Institution, February 1, 1877.

that one has word praise. Audience very attentive and indulgent. Time 1 h. 25 m. and no one left the hall, so that I may imagine there was interest in the lecture. Pace moderate: but Morison thinks I was intelligible chiefly by the distinctness of articulation.

To Miss Alice Brandreth.

Box Hill, *Feb.* 28, 1877.

My dear Miss Brandreth,—I have too much work to be in town to-morrow, and my promise to myself to go to Dannreuther's concert next time, was but my way of saying how much I liked the last. Otherwise the pleasure of being led there by you would be, as it were, to be prepared by a poet to sit with the Muses. I know you will be in full sympathy with one who chances to have said more than he meant; and indeed you should be; for by and by (yes, it must be so) a certain door will have to be broken open and a room laid bare with many Tops in it, the humming and the peg, each with his history of ONE who spun him—and now ?—so innocently! in my Dannreuther fashion on that occasion I shall come forward to plead for you.—Your very devoted

George Meredith.

To Miss Alice Brandreth.

Gordon, Jim,
Life and Limb
Risking, 'cause it is his whim,
Hounds to foller,
Breaks his collar-
Bone while giving a view-holler.
Ain't this news ?
What 's more it 's true,
Then in bed the poor lad stews;

His neck twirling
Mr. Curling
Straight has set like surgeon sterling.[1]
GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *March* 31, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—We have now a bedroom to offer you and your wife. Will you come? And can you come before the 13th April? It will rejoice us to see you, and refresh me.

Remember that it is your habit peremptorily to cry against invitations in harvest-Bug-time. Therefore we think you due to us now.

And I want you to see my cottage—annexe—chalet on the terrace. I think you will agree with me, that it is the prettiest to be found, the view is without a match in Surrey. The interior full of light, which can be moderated; and while surrounded by firs, I look over the slope of our green hill to the ridges of Leith, round to Ranmore, and the half of Norbury.

I have the hope that if you can come you will. Let it be Both of you.

I am very busy, doing little, but doing it diligently, which you know to mean well.

The article on Comedy is out: cursed with misprints that make me dance gadfly-bitten.

I am greatly taken with Goldwin Smith's article. I could not have written it, but the idea has been mine.

Trollope's art. on Cicero shows him to have a feeling for his hero. It reads curiously as though he were addressing a class of good young men. This is the effect of the style, or absence of style. One likes him for

[1] James Edward Henry Gordon, a pioneer electrical engineer and a hard rider to hounds. He married Miss Alice Brandreth.

working in that mine: only,—and yet I like a certain kind of open-mindedness. By the way, in the last book noticed (by Garnett, is it?), I find 'By the first living Italian poet.' The possible English of this is, that the preceding have been dead ones. Garnett has not to be taught English, but here is an example of the bad effect of writing much for journals. 'First of living Ital. poets,' he means.

O my dear Morley, come if only you can, for you are a great delight to me when I see you. My wife is in the cottage below, or she would send messages to yours.

To Admiral Maxse.[1]

BOX HILL, *March* 31, 1877.

MY DEAR ADMIRAL,—I can't but admire Mrs. Besant for her courage. On the whole I must approve the publication, though to me the book is repulsive. I have a senseless shrinking from it. More horrible scenes of animal life can hardly be suggested. They effectually deprive me of appetite. The male—the female. Lord God!

Your remarks on Odger were very good, I was glad to see them.

You talk of a Surrey walk. Once more you flash the old delusive flag of a holiday before me. Why do you not come? I am here. I have not removed from here for several years.—Yours ever warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

By the way, I am in my Chalet: well worth a visit. The second room of it contains the hammock-cot: enviable the sleeper therein!

[1] Captain Maxse was promoted Rear-Admiral in 1877.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *April* 4.

My dear Morley,—May, then!

But let not this be one of your lyrical postponements to a phantasm appointment: the most delusive gilded thing that ever danced between Box Hill and Brighton.

. . . There are horrid errors in the printing of the 'Comic,' some, I am afraid, attributable to me: I am the worst of correctors of my own writing.

I saw Myers' on George Sand. I took up a friend's copy of '19th Century,' and after the symposium turned to see what might be said of our favourite:—not bad, with one or two good points well done: as of the effect of a female Göthe on the ardent males.—It 's wrong to be wishing April were May, for I hope to get over a great deal of work before then. But you excite the unnatural wish.

Well. The first week in May. Are you bound to me? —You will find more flowers about you—that is one advantage.—I hope your wife is better already.—Yours ever warmly, George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *April* 5, 1877.

My dear Morley,—I have read Das Göttliche this morning, and with a feeling of new strength, which is like conception in the brain. This is the very spirit of Göthe. I have many times come in contact with it and been ennobled. Fault of mine, if not more! This high discernment, this noblest of unconsidered utterance, this is the Hymn for men. This is to be really prophet-like. All other prophecy is insolence.

I had not read it last night, being very busy:—You should know, I work and sleep up in my cottage at

present, and anything grander than the days and nights at my porch you will not find away from the Alps: for the dark line of my hill runs up to the stars, the valley below is a soundless gulf. There I pace like a shipman before turning in. In the day, with the S. West blowing, I have a brilliant universe rolling up to me:—well, after midnight I sat and thought of Göthe: and of the sage in him, and the youth. And, somewhat in his manner, the enclosed came of it. I send it to you for your private reading. It was written off before I went to bed, and has only the merit of exactly hitting its mark. I feel it this morning a poor return to make to you for Das Göttliche. But you will excuse me, for the meaning of speech is to seek an audience—if a friend, the better. By the way, some one told me the other day that he felt sure of you for Stoke. He said the Address to the Miners had made a great impression. I trust so.

I am very hard at work, writing a 5 Act Comedy in verse, besides tales, poems, touches of a novel, and helping my wife with a translation. But in this room of mine I should have no excuse for idleness. In truth work flows with me.—Adieu.—Yours ever most warmly,

George Meredith.

[*The Enclosure.*]

MENTOR AND PUPILS

MENTOR

Be warned of steps retrieved in pain.

PUPILS

We have strength, we have blood, we are young,

MENTOR

Youth sows the links, man wears the chain.

PUPILS

Shall a sweet lyric cease to be sung?

MENTOR

The song is short, the travail long.

PUPILS

Shall the morning brood over her grave?

MENTOR

Forge weapons now to meet the throng.

PUPILS

There 's a bird flying white o'er the wave.

MENTOR

The torrent of the blood control.

PUPILS

'Tis a steed bounding whither we will.

MENTOR

In more than name discern the soul.

PUPILS

There is Love like a light on the hill.

MENTOR

That light of Love is fleeting fire.

PUPILS

In the deep sea of Love let us dive.

MENTOR

The test of Love is in the lyre.

PUPILS

Give us Love, and the lyre is alive.

MENTOR

The chords are snapped by passion's touch.

PUPILS

She is there, by the tall laurel-rose.

MENTOR

You sway the staff—you grasp the crutch.

PUPILS

She is beckoning: who shall oppose?

MENTOR

Behold a giant in his prime.

PUPILS

On her breasts are the beams of the day.

MENTOR

A cripple he, surprised by Time!

PUPILS

She has loosened her girdle: give way!

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *April* 25, 1877.

My dear Morley,— . . . At this moment your Promise for the first days in May sleeps like any other innocent in the purity of infancy. Is it fair to rob it of these hours and call it to misty delusiveness before its time? I am half tempted, with a shudder, to think not; and yet we wish to know whether, as before so frequently. . . . All I can say is, that the nightingale is now in sweet song: there 's not the ghost of a harvester to bite you even in fancy. I want you to see my study; I want to see you. We have a bedroom and dressing-room for you. You will be here upon the opening of the beeches. Really the sweet o' the year.

To Lieut.-Colonel Charles Brackenbury.[1]

Box Hill, *April* 25, 1877.

My dear Brackenbury,—Overbusied, I can scarcely get time to write—I have influence with one publisher

[1] Lieut.-Colonel (later General) Charles Brackenbury, R.A. He had acted as *Times* correspondent in the Austrian-Italian and Franco-Prussian wars, and published, among other works on military subjects, *European Armaments in* 1867, and *Frederick the Great.*

only. On reading the MS. I was forced to the conclusion that I must not recommend it. Believe me, I regretted it; for I admire and could love the writer. I say earnestly it will be better to put the work by: read, meditate, and wait to produce another. She will in time do good work, for she has a head and that which spins the blood to generous fire. But it is not friendly to urge her to publish. Moreover, I doubt her getting pay for it. If I thought that she would, I might, in view of possible present needs, hesitate. Still I should not know to whom to recommend this kind of novel. She is too good to produce the popular rubbish: too young to hit higher moods.

Shall we see you in May?—War!—Ass that I was, not to go for a conscript when a lad! Soldiering is the profession of the next 15 years' future, I suppose.—Your very loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To F—— J——s.

BOX HILL, *May* 26, 1877.

What is the meaning of this nasty silence, J——! You have fallen into one of your Welsh tempers. You refuse all invitations, and you incite your good wife to gird at me and pretend that it is I who am to blame. Shame on you, Cambrian! Every Cambrian is not a shaggy inveterate in suspicion, susceptibility, thin-skinnedness, and malice. Why must you be, Jones? I forgave you when you slipped out of your bonded engagement to take me home with you and give me supper last February 1st. Were you insensible to my generosity? Your appointment by the seaside is a patent invention. We don't believe a word of it. Be a man, J——! Drop us word that you mean to come: or if you really must go down to the melancholy widowed ocean, try a stroke of humour—not original with you,

but amusing in its decorously-faced recurrence: name a day when we may expect you, after your return.—We have now a bedroom, and Will's room serves for bathroom for husbands: but if you will forego it, it will serve for a bedroom for E——, whom I (we all) should be very glad to see and hear. I wish we had a third room for Miss J——.

Good be wi' ye, ye silly sulky Taffy! Here 's a mutton-bone for you any day, if you 'll only come and take it.—Your countryman (void of their errors),

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *June* 24, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I hoped to hear from you that you were coming, and that I might look to a glad two or three days—more you never allow me in imagination, nor practically so much. Write on this head: and do not suppose that I ask it because I doubt your still graceful dexterity in evasion. I wish to see you, as part of my Summer. But why should I write in pathos! I foresee the grin up to the ear tips of exulting Puckery. And would the world believe it of its philosopher, were I to inform the world?

It is this knowledge, that I see deep and am discredited, which does for me.

I am as a cracking earth, and soon it will be too late for the seed in me to be raised by rain.

Whither go you this year? The pleasant book of Miss Edwards [1] turns my eyes to France (if I can go anywhere); but Marie gives me not the best tidings of your wife, and hints at possible German Baths, and if you were sentenced to one, I might be tempted to trudge after

[1] *A Year in Western France.*

you and sojourn in your neighbourhood a short space, just to taste German atmosphere with you and watch you divided, as no other man would be so strangely, between a certain solid intellectual approbation of the race, and disgust of their manners: admiration of their strengthiness, and a sense of their spiritual flatness: great respect for them, and a hesitancy to determine whether they are now at their full growth, or that there is light above them to conjure them higher and higher. If the latter, they are the world's masters. Adieu, my friend; I am very anxious about your Rose's health. I do think it would do you both some good to come here, and remember, now is our time to offer our poor inducement: this next three weeks.—Ever yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *August* 21, 1877.

MY DEAR FRED,—I heard of your return from Morley, and I received the Index and read 'The Cynic' and a remark on your work, rightly appreciative. Morley is now on his way. As for me, I fear I am again condemned to trot round my circle, like an old horse at a well, everlastingly pulling up the same buckets full of a similar fluid. I may be precipitated abroad by incapacity to continue writing; and once or twice the case has looked like it, though I have recovered in a middling fashion: but not to do the work I call good—rather the character of work one is glad to leave behind, however glad to have accomplished. Things look so bad (to apply them to my own affairs) for books that I doubt whether I ought to spend the money. Even when they are fairly good I have the doubt.

Adieu. All the good powers be with you. Tell me

when you start for Dinant alone. I might . . . but no.
—Yours ever warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

BOX HILL, *Sept.* 25, 1877.

DEAR AND HONOURED SIR WILLIAM,—(In Sherwood Tuck) I have just come from a visit to Brackenbury at Aldershot, and I find your letter: glad to hear from you. Notice of your departure for Wales had been forwarded to me by my private agency. I will confess I think you might have given me a day on the Hill, but my friends are all free men. Curses on him that would constrain them in aught! I have not seen the Notice you speak of, nor heard of the same. Apparently, to judge by your hints, it is by one who has thought it necessary to go mad to deal with me becomingly. This may be a compliment, but the result is that the public finds itself in the presence of not one but Two Incomprehensibles, and the impression is deepened that hard must be the nut when the cracker falls into contortions.

If you have not seen the 'New Quarterly Magazine' for July last, let me commission D'Troia to get it from Mudie's. Run your eyes over 'The Case of General Ople and Lady Camper.' I think you will recognize the General and remember the case. My love to D'Troia and the young ladies.—Ever warmly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Oct.* 18, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I hear you are at philosophic Pitfield. I wish to see you and shake your hand, and hear of your travels. I have a country cousin's eagerness for that great relation of events. Your letter from Gmünden was pleasant to receive. Morison wrote sub-

sequently of rain assailing you at Ischl, which I had vowed for you, but not desired. I have been nowhere during your absence excepting to Pitfield, and to Aldershot to Brackenbury home from the Russians. I am consequently dull, unrubbed, no reflector. I write, and not perfectly to my satisfaction.

We shall have a couple of beds here at the end of the month, if there is a chance of catching you and your wife—you do owe it to us.

Your stay on the Königsee, at the St. Bartolomae little inn at the end of the lake, must have been about the pleasantest time of your excursion. I did not see the lake at night, and I was with captious cockney comrades. I still have a throb to be up the Walzmann; I propose it, and much of that region, for next year—or next. I have not been away for six!

I hope you are refreshed, furious for the pen. . . .

George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *Nov.* 10, 1877.

My dear Morley,—Let me hear from you when you are stronger: not that I wish to ring my bell to summon you here, but that bronchitis rather alarms me. I have had reason to dread it—not on my own account, for throat and chest with me seem inexpugnable.

I am perplexed by Spottiswoode's application to me to lecture at the Royal. I hate it, and it does not pay me, it makes me nervous, and I have to give up my inner mind's work to it. But I have the question going on, whether I ought to decline anything, I, unlucky, portionless, ill-paid!

France, from a knave, fallen to a fool!

But no, the gain has been precious in the interval. She has gained in self-knowledge, and a reasonable courage.

Judging of what MacMahon may do by his antecedents, I am inclined to think that the man who could hesitate about his paramount manifest duty toward the country when plain sense told him to save the one army of France for the defence of the capital, and a telegram from the Imperial ministry pushed him to Metz, while the enemy was in front and on his flank—this Marshal Donkey might do anything.

The situation is enough to make us all anxious, but the temperance of the French gives me some repose.

De Broglie of course is the one who makes us feel blackest.—As for the army, it would split for civil war. Very probably the Republican section would be beaten; the country thrown back for ten years. But the ten would do more harm to the cause of the winners. Honest rule must come round to a people so self-contained and intelligent.—Ever yours warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 16, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I return you Harrison's letter. 'Want of courage' is no doubt often the visible gap in Celtic character; for this reason, that the Celt, if not pushing forward, will be shrinking. Movements that are impulse, either assail, or they have the tendency to contract and retreat. The French are Gallic enough to show this. Nevertheless, I see a harmonizing and solidifying of the logical brain with the mercurial blood in them. As to Gambetta and his trusting to phrases, the temptation to utter them to an interviewer must be great, either to keep conversation going, or to put the sympathetic guest in better heart, or to console oneself with a trumpet sound in touching subjects vexatious. He must be judged by his public conduct, which is good.—

Harrison speaks of the French in the tone of one who forgets that they have had a terrific whipping. And when he speaks of Mirabeau and Danton, let him imagine those two after the Revolution, opposed to a military chief more than probably having the army in his hand. —MacMahon might be shot by a Republican battalion, but the shot missing, he would have all the regiments. Conservatism and its friend Fear are strong enough to give him sway for a time. But the Republic is only a withdrawing tide. Back it comes ten years hence. In a third of the time it might be established by an alternation of conciliation and firmness. A Big Fool with power, we must treat like a madman on a housetop, and affectionately induce him to destroy himself for us. —I cannot clearly see what Harrison wants. His paper in the next 'Fnightly' may show. His 'Englishman' letters were currently instructive.

Yes, I wish to see you, and have a mill-tide of talk on varieties; but do not ask me; I have to get through a wall of work that frowns on me as one on a wrong track at present. I am very grateful for fair Florence.—Yours ever, GEORGE MEREDITH.

Cause me to be remembered in your household.

As to the sort of men who sat with Pym and Hampden, do we show them now? If not, should we pose them before the French? All countries would want a heavy shaking to bring such men to the front.—I have been pleased with the plain writing of Froude's A'Becket in the '19th Century.' Your Raynal instructs me. I am ashamed to say, I did not know of him. Pattison on 'Books' is perfectly correct. As with India, irrigation would improve his produce.—Senior's Thiers is a lasting picture to me of the Devil's own Infernal Imp. Statesman, yea, begotten by Machiavelli of the Vivandière of

the Regiment! Had I time, I would compose a La Bruyère abstract of it.—Born with Satan's blessing too! His kettle-drum taps marched France to Sedan. His, more than Louis Napoleon's. The Thiers-fed French really thought at the sound of the bugle that another chapter of the Windy History was to be written. Here I am pulled up: but I could talk with you over sheets.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 24, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—The day before your enclosure of Pattison's article on you arrived, I heard of it and was longing to see it. I have had great pleasure in reading it. A point is marked of what one would have prescribed for one's young ambition—and the 'more' may not be more worth having. Here is the man best entitled to sit as judge, and he hands you the laurel-crown; —of the secondary order only because the years are yet wanting that shall make you ripe for the first.—If I did not feel myself happily cut off from all ambition, I could envy you. As it is, I see you housed in a warm resting-place by the way, and I go on over frozen ruts whither we shall meet. Is that a stern forewarning to you? No, for an old master's praise is a lasting possession, the best of promptings. Nevertheless (and this is the sum of what I would say) the 'last infirmity of noble minds' is an infirmity, but susceptibility to the purest sources of Fame speaks of health. See the emptiness of it, take the passing benefit. Neither water nor wine shall give eternal life. That they invigorate for the hour is enough. —Here is a sermon to one who needs it less than most men: proof of pragmatical ineptitude in the deliverer!— I hope you are really better.—Your Black Christian of

the Bloody Cross appears to have been blest by GAWD[1] recently. If I had time I should like to write his hymn: Te Deum: with chorus of 'all the historians.'—Yours most warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 28, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—When Morison sent me word of poor Bridger's ambition to enter into the Grocery line in Puttenham village, I had simultaneously a vision of a shivering bare little shop edging its way by rotation to the sparse shower of nourishing gold on that—as to grocers—arctic common. I supposed Bridger must know best; as I generally do when I am prophetic.—He would have suited me had I built stables and rooms over them; and this I cannot do for a year—or two, when I hope to prosper better.

In this valley a good gardener may sometimes command a place; or good coachman.

Can he be strongly recommended in either capacity? He has, I think, a wife and children: how many? How much does he require for his services per week?

I do not know of a place vacant; but the above particulars should be known to me. I promise not to forget him.

I go to town for a night to-morrow, and shall call on Morison. He writes in a wildly lamentable tone of France. And this when such is the popular feeling (including the military) toward the Republic, that a conspiracy to ruin it could not succeed beyond five years, and would displace it for that term only to endear it by proving its value to the country. That big Dunderhead in the hands of the shuffling Duke and the clerics may do harm for a time. But he has not got much, it is evident, by sounding the army. All depends on the Republicans

[1] Note to letter: 'Or "Gord."'

making no false move. Patience! as the man says in Mauprat. The power of taking an injury without scoring blood for it, will be of wonderful example in France.—Yours, trusting for a better account of your health,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

I salute your wife. A kiss to Florence. A punch in the ribs to Johnson.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *First ten minutes of* 1878.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I tossed off a letter to St. B. to end the year '77. I greet you in the first hour of the New One, after a look at the stars from my chalet door, and listening to the bells. We have just marked one of our full stops, at which Time, turning back as he goes, looks with his old-gentleman smile. To come from a gaze at the stars—Orion and shaking Sirius below him—is to catch a glance at the inscrutable face of him that hurries us on, as on a wheel, from dust to dust.—I thought of you and how it might be with you this year: hoped for good: saw beyond good and evil to great stillness, another form of moving for you and me. It seems to me that Spirit is,—how, where, and by what means involving us, none can say. But in this life there is no life save in spirit. The rest of life, and we may know it in love,—is an aching and a rotting.

It is late. I have been writing all day. With all my heart I wish you well.—And am ever yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

BOX HILL, *March* 15, 1878.

MY CITIZEN! my Farrier! soon to be my Common Serjeant!—You have my vote and interest. I am out

among the Aldermen to canvass them. Though it seems a deplorable halting and stooping on a path hitherto brilliant as it has been adventurous, that you should wish to be a serjeant at all, and a common serjeant of all things, we will seek to gratify your good wish, queer in appearance only, I trust. What does the Great Mother say to it? Down here there is an idea that, in apprehension of war, you apply for the post to prepare the Court of Aldermen to face the foe by drilling. But surely this is a new development? Only, confound it, you are always blazing in new places—as though the Great Mother had been dreaming of crackers at a certain period.

As for the latest Photographs—hum. I was glad of the gift, glad to see the face. But it's rather steely; capital for a Common Serjeant, whom I would depute to the post on the strength of it.

Let me hear if you are in for a big dignity; and when you have a berth to fling to a dog, remember where he lieth.

The Mg. Post has fought well beside the 'Pall Mall,' but the sentimental or party-ridden English have spoiled the hour.

It is now too late to oust the Russians. No country like ours can afford to fight at so terrible a disadvantage as they offer us. We must wait for new complications. Meanwhile press for an army. Ultimately it will come to a Conscription, and the sooner the better. The volunteering system gives us men no match for countries that bring their best into the field, and in overpowering hosts.

Adieu, my friend. Give my love to Mrs. Common Serjeant and the young ladies.

I do hope you will give us a day in the spring.

G. M.

To Miss Alice Brandreth.[1]

April 11, 1878.

Now dawns all waxen to your seal of life,
This day which names you bride to make you wife,
Time shows the solid stamp : then see, dear maid,
Round those joined hands our prayers for you inlaid.

GEORGE AND MARIE M.

To R. L. Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 4, 1878.

MY DEAR STEVENSON,—I had not time to write to you immediately after reading the book,[2] but my impressions are fresh. My wife has gained possession of it at last, so I should have to run down to the house to quote correctly. She fell on the book, I snatched it, she did the same, but I regaining it, cut the pages, constituting an act of ownership. I leave this to her invariably, so she was impressed and abandoned the conflict. I have been fully pleased. The writing is of the rare kind which is naturally simple yet picked and choice. It is literature. The eye on land and people embraces both, and does not take them up in bits. I have returned to the reading and shall again. The reflections wisely tickle, they are in the right good tone of philosophy interwrought with humour.

My protest is against the Preface and the final page. The Preface is keenly in Osric's vein—' everything you will, dear worthy public, but we are exceeding modest and doubt an you will read us, though exquisitely silken-calved we are, and could say a word of ourselves, yet on seeing our book, were we amazed at our littleness,

[1] On her marriage with Mr. J. E. H. Gordon.
[2] *An Inland Voyage*, published in May 1878.

indeed and truly, my lord Public!' As for the closing page, it is rank recreancy. 'Yes, Mr. Barlow,' said Tommy, 'I have travelled abroad, under various mishaps, to learn in the end that the rarest adventures are those one does not go forth to seek.' 'My very words to him,' said Mr. Barlow to himself, at the same time presenting Tommy with a guinea piece.—This last page is quite out of tone with the spirit of the book.

I remember 'On the Oise,' you speak of the river hurrying on, 'never pausing to take breath.' This, and a touch of excess in dealing with the reeds, whom you deprive of their beauty by overinforming them with your sensations, I feel painfully to be levelled at the Saxon head. It is in the style of Dickens.

But see what an impression I have of you when these are the sole blots I discover by my lively sensations in the perusal.

Should you be in communication with Mr. Henley, I beg you will convey to him my sense of the honour he does me by giving so much attention to my work. I, who have worked for many years not supposing that any one paid much heed to me, find it extraordinary. His praise is high indeed, but happily he fetches me a good lusty clout o' the head now and again, by which I am surprisingly well braced and my balance is restored. Otherwise praise like that might operate as the strong waters do upon the lonely savage unused to such a rapture.

You should see the foliage of our valley. Come you to London on your way to the Continent, you must give us a visit. Whither do you go? How is the mood for work with you? In August I believe I am bound for Dauphiné, where a French brother-in-law of my wife, a militaire, has a pied à terre on the borders of Savoy. I am rather more in the mood for South Tyrol, but the

invitation attracts, and Dauphiné has heights enough. My 'Egoist' is on the way to a conclusion. Of pot-boilers let none speak. Jove hangs them upon necks that could soar above his heights but for the accursed weight.

Adieu. I trust you are well. Look to health. Run to no excess in writing or in anything. I hope you will feel that we expect much of you. I beg you to remember me to your father and mother.—Yours very faithfully,

George Meredith.

To G. W. Foote.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 19, 1878.

Dear Sir,—I have not to learn from your letter that you do me the honour to rank my works of some worth, and that you put yourself to trouble to make them better known.[1] I will not offer you my thanks, for such things are past the sense of obligation. To feel that men like you and 'B. V.' read and have a taste for what I produce, is full of encouragement to me to write on with good heart.—We will not speak of our public which is a funny public, pardonable for its humours, and wants rough shaking and persistent teaching before it will have a zest or respect for literature that is not directed to adorn a library or illustrate a drawing-room table. Peut-être que cela lui vient d'un manque de cœur. At any rate, the English cure one early of a desire for applause, and as well as I could do, I have worked without thought of that and the profit coming of it.—I should not fancy that cheap editions of my writings would sell. Perhaps they will go better in time, but I cannot voluntarily advertise them 'by the author of . . .'

Now let me add what is of more importance to my mind in communicating with you: that I admire the

[1] Mr. Foote had written complaining of what he considered gratuitous hindrances to the circulation of Meredith's works.

fight you are making, and class you among the true soldiers Heinrich Heine called himself for doing battle with the pen. I have in your example to suppose that ours is a public neglectful of brave men; a worse offence than neglect of a man of letters.

As to my poems, I have lost the ardour for publishing them; perhaps in a year or two they may appear; I am well content to remain unpublished while the poems of 'B. V.' are withheld. To him as to me, the conditions of sale, which frown on collections of verse not offering themselves as appropriate gift-books for the innumerable nuptial curate and his bride, are, I fear, adverse. Poetry in England is required to have a function of a practical kind, and to exercise it.

I trust I show you that you give me great pleasure in writing to me.—Most faithfully yours,

George Meredith.

To J. Comyns Carr.

Box Hill, *Oct.* 9, 1878.

My dear Carr,—Praise of yours comes from the right quarter. There is no man whom I would so strongly wish to please with my verse. I wish I had more time for it, but my Pactolus, a shrivelled stream at best, will not flow to piping. And as to publishing books of verse, I have paid heavily for that audacity twice in Pounds sterling. I had for audience the bull, the donkey, and the barking cur. He that pays to come before them a third time—we will not give him his name.

This hullaballoo of air with drenchers to vary the monotony of row, though I like it myself, will not allow an invitation to allure you. But when there is a cessation, perhaps you and Mrs. Carr will do us the honour to come and see the Indian summer here. A

dozen differently-coloured torches you will find held up in our woods. For which, however, as well as for your sensitive skin, we require stillness and a smiling or sober sky.

I heard of your separation from Greenwood by Jovian editorial stroke, and of your rap back. I regret the matter. He is the loser. Let us meet soon. It would do me good to hear you swear an oath by the might and majesty of Benedetto never again to let a month go by without seeing me, whereas we begin to count the year going.

Give my warm salutations to Mrs. Carr.—I am, yours friendliest, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Oct.* 14, 1878.

MY DEAR ADMIRAL,—On Tuesday, as you are well aware, I am bound to make my pilgrimage to town. This afternoon I am disengaged, but having to work up to half-past three, I can't mount the hill on the faint chance of finding you—I should be late in my return, and I have work at night.

Yet I want very much to see you—apart from an ancient foolishness that I cherish and keep young. The Governor [1] is in violent wrath with a Dr. Oelker who attacks him as Governor of his Island. Instantly his Excellency despatches me all the papers on the subject of this contention—Oelker's pamphlet, his own comments, Hamburg journals. And it appears that Oelker obtained insertion for one of his letters in the 'Times.' But I have not seen this letter, I am very busy finishing a work. I am not controversial, and I really should not know how to proceed with prudence if I were. How

[1] Sir Fitzhardinge Maxse, then Governor of Heligoland.

put the Governor's reply into shape? And would it not be wiser to make no reply, but lie by for the next attack, and then write out fairly what it is desired should be said. Otherwise a second hand is in great danger by making a mess of it.—Try to call here on Wednesday afternoon, that we may consult.

I have been nowhere but on my weekly hack-cab-horse expeditions, and it is doubtful that I shall ever go anywhere except on that tramroad, until I proceed in mute accompaniment to my Last March. Life under these conditions is not so seductive as it appeared in youth, though in youth I looked out under a hail of blows. I don't complain, you see, of inconsistency in my career. If I could quit England, hold off from paper, and simply look on for the remainder of my term—mountains near—I would ask for no better. To be mixed up with them is hard, these English are so astonishing to my ideas of dignity and valour. Their present hugging of their India, which they are ruining for the sake of giving a lucrative post to younger sons of their middle class, is a picture for mankind. They and the Russians are matched. But the Russians have the excuse of barbarian politicians. Adieu.—Yours warmly, GEORGE M.

To James Cotter Morison.

BOX HILL.

MY DEAR ST. B.,—It was like you to think of me when you were saying Adieu to dear old Pitfield. I repeat it, and with the same feelings.

I hope to propose myself to you for a night in January. At present I have the Devil behind me slave-driving. How often would it be a consolation to me to see you for an hour if I could but spare time. Ahasuerus passing the cheerfullest of Inns has about the same kind of feeling.

The other day Tom Taylor happened to be writing to me, and he put as a pendant, that he had been reading Morison's Gibbon and liked it very greatly. I hope you are all well. I give a thought to the Westminster Carp [1] now and then on frosty mornings and see the mortar-board blunting its angles in passengers' eyes on the way to school at lightning speed. Give my love to the children and a delicate morsel—manipulated by yourself if you must—to Mrs. S. Morley I trust you have good news of.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 11, 1878.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—An artist who has been stricken with blindness has taken to his pen and has published 2 vols. called 'Half Hours of a Blind Man's Holiday,' by W. W. Fenn. I had a slight acquaintance with him once, and he writes to me to do what I can to get his book noticed, under the strange supposition that because I publish works of fiction I have interest on the Press. He does not beg to be favourably reviewed, but early, and perhaps with a bit of consideration for his case, which is hard. In ordinary circumstances I would withstand many requests of the kind before troubling you. You will see that I am excused.

I go strongly with you in your work. To have won Ld. Shaftesbury from the Holy Faction is a fine piece of work, and all your doing. For the Rhodope horrors required to be struck on many times, and no one else did it. I never see you, and the loss is greatly mine.—Your affectionate GEORGE MEREDITH.

[1] Mr. Cotter Morison's son—now Sir Theodore Morison, K.C.I.E.—at that time at Westminster School—an ardent fisherman.

To James Cotter Morison.

BOX HILL, *Dec.* 26, 1878.

DEAREST ST. B.,—One word of Adieu to you before you are off, and my wishes for sweet wafting airs to you, away and home.—I have recently looked at Leslie Stephen's 'Alps in Winter,' and the refreshingness of it bids me ask you why you don't go to see Geneva and a valley or two, and home round by the Simplon and the Riviera, taking Burgundy and Langres on your return?

But pleasure perhaps is choicest when we launch upon (*the waters*) and leave the route to them. Let me hear from you when you are at Montague Place again. After which you are to give me as good a chronicle of this as of the preceding journey.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To G. W. Foote.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 31, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—I have ordered 'The Liberal' of my bookseller, and shall do what I can to make it spread. I trust you will succeed with it. I am naturally doubtful, considering the public we have, but of many failures comes the final victory, and to fail is neither shameful nor disheartening if our hearts are firmly set upon the cause we support. If by chance I have any piece of writing, or see matter to write of, that I think may suit your magazine, I will forward it. At present I have little leisure. But I shall request you to examine rigidly any writing you receive from me, and that you will not hesitate to reject it, should it not be perfectly to your taste. I am too hard on myself to be subject to sensitiveness, and I have a considerate feeling for editors.—Yours very truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 31, 1878.

My dear Greenwood,—I wish you health and strength for the New Year. You do the work of a good soldier; I see your watchfulness perpetually, besides the big strokes and thwacks; and for no man have I so warm a desire to see him sustained to keep to his task, as for you. Adieu. Remember me to Traill.—Yours,

George Meredith.

To R. L. Stevenson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 16, 1879.

My dear Stevenson,—I have had but the song of a frog for a correspondent since your letter reached me, and my note is Batrachian still. A hint of suppressed Influenza seems to have been the cause; my customary specific of hard exercise, with which I generally sweat out all attacks, has this time failed. I do nothing but read, and that flimsily.—We have all been grieved to hear of your illness. Mariette says, 'Il a mangé trop de pickles!' I fear it may be from overwork. Take my advice, defer ambition, and let all go easy with you until you count forty:—then lash out from full stores. You are sure to keep imagination fresh, and will lose nothing by not goading it.

My 'Egoist' has been out of my hands for a couple of months, but Kegan Paul does not wish to publish it before October. I don't think you will like it: I doubt if those who care for my work will take to it at all. And for this reason, after doing my best with it, I am in no hurry to see it appear. It is a Comedy, with only half of me in it, unlikely therefore to take either the public or my friends. This is true truth, but I warned you that I am cursed with a croak.—I am about one quarter

through 'The Amazing Marriage,' which, I promise you, you shall like better.

Paul cannot yet let me have a copy of the 'Donkey in the Cevennes,' of which I am very hopeful.

We fully expect you and look for you to come to us in May. Please bring good weather. Let me hear that you progress and can put one leg forward. Then we can calculate that the other will follow, and we will count the days till we have you. Our plans are, to fill the cottage with friends during May, June, and part of July; after which we go to Dauphiné for some weeks, home about the end of September. . . . My wife condoles with you, greets you, and will be glad to welcome you, of this from me be well assured. I beg you to present my compliments to your father and mother.—Yours very cordially,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Cotter Morison.

BOX HILL, *May* 6, 1879.

MY DEAR ST. B.,—Mariette has come right round and is rosy again. But I am lank, limp, and cavern-chapped; I have had and have not quite thrown off an attack of what is called catarrh of the stomach, owing to weakness in that region from a prolonged course of writing at night during winter. And since it came on I have been quite unable to write a line. The effect is a sort of 'old man's cough': You cough your breath out and labour to draw it back as if you had to count a million to the minute, and was rising in a bucket from perdition's deeps, with every prospect of going down with a run. The windpipe closes; in fact, the hangman has you by the throat each ten or twenty minutes; you are a merry Gallows' bird. And to be waked up at night by a seizure, is akin to the dark archangel's intimation to you to prepare for im-

mediate flight. Happily there was no inflammation of the trachea accompanying it.

However, I am getting free of this clutch. My wife and Mariette go to Eastbourne next week; and I think, if you will have me, I will offer myself for a couple of days. I should like to come. I think it would be Monday, but I will write. Let me hear if the week I choose is one to suit you.

I saw Browning at the Grosvenor Gallery private inspection last Wednesday, and mentioned to him that his Pheidippides (the run to Sparta) had been proposed by you to me, and by me shrunk from. I have not yet seen the poem.

Marriott gave me a good account of Morley some time back, and that, as I never see him now, refreshed me.—Adieu, dear St. B.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Cotter Morison.

BOX HILL, *May* 22, 1879.

DEAR ST. B.,—I am glad that the strain is at an end with Theodore.

His fishing-rod was despatched yesterday by rail, with a label addressed to him.

But the Fatal Breeks have not arrived.

Nor will they, I should think.

Adieu, my dear friend. I hope the boy will have a pleasant holiday. Here all my people are absent. The carpets are up and the walls are peeled. I go below for a dinner and hurriedly return from a place that looks as if gutted par les Prussiens.—The days were pleasant with you, as always.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, 1879.

My dearest Fred,—I send bag to-day, come up to-morrow. I pass Cubitt's eternal finger at 3 p.m. Meet me there, if you can. My way will be up by the avenue, his drive.

Will is improving, but prostrate, and likely to be legless for a couple of weeks. Boys have to learn in this way. If they will not take good advice in the brain, Nature thumps them. Happy they who are admonished even then.—Your loving George M.

To G. W. Foote.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 30, 1879.

Dear Sir,—I have read Mr. Thomson's article on my book, with the singular pleasure we feel when it is evident that we have been loved of old date, and by the very worthiest, and that nothing but love can have that way of speaking. The mental stature of the critic is the point; after which the sincerity. He who does me the honour to praise me in this instance, is to be valued in both respects. I wish that work of his were forthcoming.

You will pardon the delay in my reply to you. I have been away from home, rather unwell, as I grieve to hear it is the case with Mr. Thomson. I finished a 3 vol. work rapidly, and as it comes mainly from the head and has nothing to kindle imagination, I thirsted to be rid of it soon after conception, and it became a struggle in which health suffered, and my unfailing specific of hard exercise was long in resting me. I look to the Dauphiné Alps, to which I go in July, to do that more completely.

Let me hope that 'The Liberal' promises to flourish. I have it monthly, but know not what opinion to form

of your chances of success. I should venture to say, that a strong political article is wanted each month—to head the flock:—one in which the Philosophy of Radicalism would cast its light on parties. But the pen to show philosophy in controversial Radicalism is rarely to be met.—I am, most faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Dennis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 5, 1879.

DEAR DENNIS,—Be assured that I have no other feeling than thankfulness to one who can take notice of my work without seizing me by the collar to shake me, and then pitch me upon Covent Garden's cabbage-leaves. I have found it rare to be treated otherwise in the land of bulls and bull-dogs. But you spoke in the tone of criticism, and if not wholly, I could partly agree with you. When I think of what I say of others, I fully accord the right of the world to have its reply upon me: and all that I pretend to do is to write as well as I can.—Faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Cotter Morison.

BOX HILL, *July* 1, 1879.

MY DEAR ST. B.,—I discover that the date of your dinner-party falls on a Tuesday. Now—that is a day when I am quite a slave, and never free until half-past eight. So I cannot come. But ask me for some day when you will be alone. And better still, after your 15th, give me a visit here and take a draught of Box Hill aqueous atmosphere—for dry is nowhere to be had. To me, however, the days and nights are splendid: cloud-scenery of the mightiest. Tell me you will come.

Have not the papers all gone ignoble mad over Prince

Louis Napoleon, whom they insist on calling the Prince Imperial, as if with the design to offend the French? On this occasion the 'Pall Mall' is not an inch above the others. The Prince was a legacy of blood to France. As a professional Pretender and youth of good courage, he sought distinction: and consequently he pressed to the front:—and if he had come home without brilliant distinction, he would have been ridiculous to the French for having done nothing to repolish the name of a Sedanned Bonaparte. To abuse our Generals and officers for letting him see service is foul folly.—He was evidently a little intoxicated with his first command.—It would of course have been as well if Lieut. Carey had turned an eye to look after him.—Here is a strange war, in which the best of our nation are heartily with the enemy!—I am not perfectly re-established, anæmic, vacuous, adust, songless, fountainless. I hope it is better with you. My love to all.—Your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Comyns Carr is a capital fellow and good boon-fellow. The other man you mention is an underbred and tiresome dolt.

To James Thomson.

I am glad to be in personal communication with you. The pleasant things you have written of me could not be other than agreeable to a writer. I saw that you had the rare deep love of literature; rare at all times and in our present congestion of matter almost extinguished; which led you to recognize any effort to produce the worthiest. For when a friend unmasked your initials, I was flattered. For I had read the 'City of Dreadful

Night,' and to be praised by the author of that poem, would strike all men able to form a judgment upon eminent work, as a distinction.

In July 1878 James Thomson was—through Mr. Foote's introduction—put in correspondence with Meredith, whose work he had long held in high esteem.

To James Thomson.

1879.

The Reviewers are not likely to give you satisfaction. But read them, nevertheless, if they come in your way. The humour of a situation that allots the pulpit to them, and (for having presumed to make an appearance) the part of Devil to you, will not fail of consolation. My inclination is to believe that you will find free-thoughted men enough to support you.

To R. L. Stevenson.

GOLDRILL HOUSE, PATTERDALE,
WESTMORELAND, *July* 28, 1879.

MY DEAR STEVENSON,—I am here with the Editor of the 'Fortnightly,' battling with rain and mists, and stiff from a recent stiffish path up and down crags of a sufficient slope for brooks and kids. Now and then we have a spot of sun. He would smile, but he must cry, and he has got a tragic handkerchief, and with horrid iteration of stage action he resumes it when we are expecting him to give us a countenance. There is a nymph whose death he caused by giving too much.—I am not so far from you, my host says. It is his intention to write to you shortly apropos of work in his imperial contemplation. I have

ventured to assure him that there will be no man better for it. He and I have been wonderfully pleased with the Cevennes excursion and the Donkey. I prize Modestine above the cause. The night in the Pine Forest is memorable. I should have written of it in the fresh burst of my satisfaction, but knew not where to aim to hit you. —The diplomatic Kegan has dealt me a stroke. Without a word to me, he sold the right of issue of the 'Egoist' to the 'Glasgow Herald,' and allowed them to be guilty of a perversion of my title. I wrote to him in my incredulous astonishment. He replied to me, excusing himself with cool incompetency. He will have to learn (he is but young at it) that these things may be done once—not more.

I fancy I shall leave Morley for Box [Hill] on Tuesday, hardly later, except perchance on the tempting of a fine day. Give my compliments with addition of warmth to them to your Mother and Father. Henley wrote for my Essay on Comedy. I have directed my wife to post it to him.

Adieu. Keep strong work in view, for you are of the few who can accomplish it. Let me hear of you when the mood is on you, and encourage the mood to come.—
Your friendliest GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 5, 1879.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—If you care to have a copy of my latest book, will you tell me where I can leave it when I come to town on Tuesday next. I am so busy on the one day of my enforced visit to your Metropolis, that I cannot, as often I wish, turn aside to St. George's Road from Victoria Station; but would it suit you to

send to Hill, the baker of bread and biscuits, Albert Mansions, Victoria Street, if I leave the volumes there addressed to you? I have this time fought resolutely to preserve a copy for you, though they do but dole out four to me. Whether you will like it, I cannot guess, as the whole cast of it is against the modern style; and you are not obliged to say anything about it, if you do not. Give my love to the 5 years besieged and the young ladies. Accept it yourself.—Your faithfullest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 10, 1879.

MY DEAR LORD WILLIAM,—I shall not say that the Tory Government is worth a rap until I hear of you as a City Magistrate, and the news that your Queen has laid her broadsword so smartly upon you that you have sprung up a knight. I wish immensely for an evening with you all. The state of the case is, that I come but one day to town, and I am busy at home with fresh work. On Tuesday I am at liberty till 8½ P.M. when I am at London Bridge Station to return to my Hill. I could not put off my work in the day without mulcting myself heavily, and so, just for the present, till my work is easier in my hand, I must abstain from offering myself to you. This however I cannot but add: that I wish greatly to see you all. But will you not think of coming down to me some day? Tom Taylor was here yesterday, with family, and they found our Indian summer magnificent. The woods are worth seeing. Even in the winter, as you know well, we can fill the poet's mind with cherishable matter. I come to town to-morrow from Dorking 10 A.M.—Arriving at Victoria station at 11: and if I don't

see you (I could wish to, but I know how hard-worked you are), I will march over to Hill, Baker, and deposit with him the Three Volumes, addressed to you, to be called for. My love to you all.—Your faithfullest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *March* 2, 1880.

MY DEAR FRED,—Though we are not running together we need not be disunited. I follow you sometimes in the newspapers and think of you often. But you, on account of your infidelities, protest to be the warmer.—By the way, your letters on the Commune greatly pleased me.

I am very unwell. During the frost I was able to work in the morning and evening. When the soft winds came I broke down, the stomach lost all power, and since then I have worked badly and waked continually. I will try and call on you to-morrow, when I shall be in town, but doubt my ability.

I will try to get the poem on 'France' at Chapman and Hall's. It has not been republished and is in the Jany. number of the Fortnightly for 1871.—I have a copy somewhere. If I can find it to-day you shall have it.—I shall be at the Garrick at 7 o'clock to-morrow, and if you don't see me between 12 and 1 P.M. make an effort for the Garrick. English politics appear to be at their highest a hurly-burly, and I don't wonder that French should have a greater hold on you. The Liberal chiefs here have ruined the cause for 20 years. The only hope, it seems to me, is that Radicalism should be avowed, and the sham medium done away with. But then there would be no prospects of Office for a long term: and at least the prospect is desired. This country is Tory. The party against it is a fractional party, only to be held

together by one of the strong causes which embrace general interests. The work done, it goes to pieces, for the reason that Liberal and Radical sentiment is shared by a very minor portion. There is no soul of Liberalism.

Hopeless, I suppose, to think of asking you to come down here?—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Thomson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 27, 1880.

DEAR SIR,—I will not delay any longer to write to you on the subject of your book, though I am not yet in a condition to do justice either to the critic or the poet, for owing to the attack I suffered under last year, I have been pensioned off all work of any worth of late; and in writing to you about this admirable and priceless book of verse I have wished to be competent to express my feeling for your merit, and as much as possible the praise of such rarely equalled good work. My friends could tell you that I am a critic hard to please. They say that irony lurks in my eulogy. I am not in truth frequently satisfied by verse. Well, I have gone through your volume, and partly a second time, and I have not found the line I would propose to recast. I have found many pages that no other English poet could have written. Nowhere is the verse feeble, nowhere is the expression insufficient; the majesty of the line has always its full colouring, and marches under a banner. And you accomplished this effect with the utmost sobriety, with absolute self-mastery. I have not time at present to speak of the City of Melancolia. There is a massive impressiveness in it that goes beyond Dürer, and takes it into upper regions where poetry is the sublimation of the mind of man, the voice of our highest. What might have been

said contra poet, I am glad that you should have forestalled and answered in 'Philosophy'—very wise writing. I am in love with the dear London lass who helped you to the 'Idyll of Cockaigne.' You give a zest and new attraction to Hampstead Heath. . . . —Yours very faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 4, 1880.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—You are having thousands of letters and are deep in business. If I swell the list with my bit of sentiment, I can make it short because I am certain that you know me true to you. My first impression last Saturday evening was one of a personal catastrophe. I have walked per annum about 450 miles for my Pall Mall. And I felt that it was a startling loss to the country. Yours was the one English paper that could boast of independent views and competent power of expression. On Sunday the Tramps came down for a walk to Leith Hill (which was glorious, and the feast ensuing satisfactory) and they were sympathetic. We said [that] Greenwood thumped, and hard: We loved him when we thought him right, we hated when we thought him wrong, but right or wrong, the fist was honest, it was a giant's and it was English. However, Monday brought the better news that you soon pilot and captain another vessel. The Pall Mall did not make you, but you the P.M. So it will be with the new venture, and I still believe that the country has enough of the right metal in it to back your new conception of the signification of journalism. I could proceed, but it would be chattering. Certain worthy words were printed by the old Morning Post, which pleased me. Adieu, I am always with you at heart, and ever yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To R. L. Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *June* 16, 1880.

MY DEAR STEVENSON,—We have all had great rejoicing over news coming direct from you, 'drawn from the Springs.' Mariette, Will, my wife and I congratulate you on your temerity. We all want to know when it is that we are to see you. Bear that in mind, and let us hear of you when you turn your face east to the Island again. We had rumours of you: first from Walter Pollock, who came down to Leatherhead to lecture on Dumas the Elder: then from Leslie Stephen, on his visit to us at the head of six of the famous corps of the Sunday Tramps: but these rumours were vague, though they blew note of a Wife and had thunder in them. Let me tell you that our household roars at the absence of any communication from her lord concerning the lady. Has he married Enigma—to tell of whom is split the head? Is she American?—Californian?—Scottish washed in Pacific brine?

The Sunday Tramps visiting us were L. S. for leader or Pied Piper, Morison, Fredk. Pollock, Croom Robertson, Edgeworth and another. Will and I shouldered a sack of cold sausages, 'Polinaris and Hock, and met them at old Dorking Station. Thence away to Leith Hill, where, in splendid sunlight, we consumed the soul of the sack, talked spiritedly (you may have been mentioned among the brilliant subjects), rolled and smoked. Then down the piny clefts of the hill by Friday Street into the sloping meadows each side the Tillingbourne leaping through Evelyn's Wooton, along under Ranmore to our cottage and dinner. To this day the walk has a bubbling memory: L. S. in a recent number of the 'Pall Mall' has described it in the philosophic manner.—By the way, you have

heard that Morley has the 'Pall Mall'? Greenwood is off to the 'St. James's Gazette,' after a snap with George Smith, who has a son-in-law that is Gladstonite. Hence Gladstone's victory at the elections precipitated the fall of Greenwood, the foe of Gladstone. But the fall of very mighty heroes is to rise. Greenwood towers in his new paper: the poor 'Pall Mall' drags on melancholily, as it were with bowels out, for Greenwood marched the whole of the 'Pall Mall' staff away to his drumming, and Morley has to be abroad recruiting.

Last year I was down with Morley at Ullswater. We talked of you and he wrote to you in your hills near Edina, but had no answer. He wanted to engage you to do some work for the 'Fortnightly'—had it in his mind to propose Travels in the Vosges or Harz, I think. Leaving Westmoreland I took my family to France, where it was discovered that Will had Whooping Cough; an illumination to me, for in the Spring I had been seized with an incomprehensible attack, Mariette as well, all the symptoms the same as Will's. I used to cough at night until the works threatened a strike, and I was frightfully overthrown by it. I was partly under the shadow of it when you last saw me. I left my family in Normandy and crossed Touraine and the centre of France to Clermont-Ferrand, by rail through the Chaulat, a bit of your Cevennes country, to Nîmes, on to Marseilles and Bordighera, back to Dauphiné. After a couple of weeks in the Norman home we returned to our cot. Here I have been working ever since. The children are well. I have an idea of sending Will to Westminster School for the term after Christmas. I fancy I have more to say, but there's no space. We have heard on all sides great praise of your Cevennes tour. The article on Thoreau is good reading.

Let me hear from you again.

I am, with my heartiest salute to Mrs. Robert Louis, your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

Both dogs, Islai and Jacobi, in sound condition.

To Edmund Gosse.[1]

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 4, 1880.

DEAR SIR,—A letter such as you have done me the honour to send me is, as you must know in your experience, the best reward and encouragement a writer can have.—I am, yours very faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Sir William Hardman.[2]

BOX HILL, *Feb.* 7, 1881.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I heard of your loss of your mother long after this had befallen you. Whatever strikes at your breast must always touch mine, and I need not tell you of my sympathy. But that can hardly be called a loss in which the reason of all concerned is forced to acquiesce in spite of grief. I thought over the old time, and a good soul gone, a right pleasant face, and your natural regrets, and then felt that it had come to you in the natural order of things.

This is to tell you that I have a book [3] for you—not to be reviewed: only to be read at your entire leisure. I fear you will not care for it. But it is history, and a curious chapter of human nature.

Often I meditate writing to propose myself for an evening. I find it impossible to spare the time, for an unpopular author has to work hard. Some day I shall

[1] In acknowledgment of a letter expressing appreciation of 'Phœbus with Admetus.'

[2] Who had recently become Editor of the *Morning Post*.

[3] *The Tragic Comedians*.

hope to descend on you. My love to D'Troia and the young ladies.

The book shall be left at the University Club, Suffolk Street.—Ever your affectionate GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Cotter Morison.

BOX HILL, *March* 28, 1881.

DEAREST ST. B.,—Will brings me word that Theodore gives a bad report of you. How is it? Pray let me hear from some member of the monastery. I was about to send you a vehement denunciation of your silence: St. Bernardine in lofty wrath; but if you are ill, I retract, and down on my knees for your recovery. I, by dint of exercise upon Rakoczy water, am coming round to some sanity of condition.—How wonderfully well Morley is driving the 'Pall Mall.' We may say too good for that, but he is a priceless editor. On the other hand the 'St. James's Gazette' is an astonishing collapse of ability. It is nothing but incessant barking.

'The day is going, now 'tis noon,
Greenwood 'gins bay the Gladstone moon,
While temperate Morley with assuaging voice
Bids England in her bigger G. rejoice.'

I have not seen Morley for long.—It is very good of you all to let us have Theodore at Easter. We will take our best care of him. Will is very sensible of his kindness at Westminster. My boy has been much improved—'manlified'—by the school already, likes it, is growing proud of it, and may in a modest way prove a credit to it before he leaves.

Give my love to all and believe me ever yours at heart,
GEORGE MEREDITH.

The dreadful curse of Verse is on me, and has been for two months.

To Arthur Cecil Blunt.[1]

Box Hill, *May* 16, 1881.

My dear Arthur,—My wife is to be in town this week, and would like me to hint to you in roundabout phrase that the present of (you see I have not the feminine genius) tickets for four to some place of entertainment would give her not only personal satisfaction but a sort of intimately theatrical air to flaunt before her friends, two of whom are girls from the country who think actors are demigods, and one an old lady who laughs for an hour at a casual stage grimace, or a tale of a tightness of breech, or what you will that 's funny. All four would make a splendid quartette of claqueurs for any new piece you may know of, whether in or out of it.

So far I have done my duty, and I think delicately and elegantly. They are people who pay to witness our stage entertainments, so it will not astonish you that some people should rank it a favour to be allowed to see them for nothing. I have advised my wife to go and see (it was once my doom while waiting for Chaumont) your great Mr. Collette in 'Bounce,' your great modern Play. I fancy the spectacle might work a cure for curiosity.

On Sunday next the Tramps, headed by Leslie Stephen, dine with me after a walk to Leith Hill. Sunday after there will be room, and this is the jolly bachelor hour of the year, remember.—Yours ever, George Meredith.

To Arthur Cecil Blunt.

Box Hill, *May* 17, 1881.

My dear Arthur,—I am asked by my wife whether I gave you her address in town. I reply that I think

[1] The Arthur Cecil of the playhouse.

not, having merely fulfilled a formality, which you could treat as such, and so an end to the matter. But women have not this fine philosophy, and the great exemplar of the sex to me keeps repeating:

'Footman';

and again

'Mrs. Footman';

which seems like a contradiction in terms—a violent collision and impossible conjunction of the sexes; besides imputing I know not what to the man of calves:—

'Footman' (says she).
46 Torrington Square.'

There was a fair Footman of Torrington Square
Desired to a Theatre Royal to repair,
With her nieces three, purple as Scotia's thistle,
And enjoy the rich humours of great Mr. Cecil,
Who of the Comic Muse questionless mate is,
And this they were anxious for perfectly gratis.

With which, dear Arthur, vive atque vale.—Yours,
George Meredith.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 19, 1881.

My dear Arthur,—I have been struck to the heart by hearing ill news of your health from Lionel Robinson. He was here yesterday, and told me of your having had to consult a physician in London about spitting of blood. Let me know of your present condition immediately, and of how you feel affected, and what you think to be the cause of it. The account of the nature of your work makes me fully commend the wisdom of your decision to quit it and Lille. It would severely tax the strongest.

You should have rest for a year. The first thing to consider is the restoration of your physical soundness, and rest in the right sort of atmosphere for you might do much in a few months:—either on our South Coast, or Devon; or if advisable at Davos-platz in the Grisons, where friends of mine of weak lungs have been with profit. Your pride, I hope, will not be offended if I offer to eke out your income during the term of your necessary relapse. You have laboured valiantly and won our respect, and you may well consent to rest for awhile, when that is the best guarantee for your taking up the fight again. But come to us in September: I fancy your term at Lille is then over, and we shall all be overjoyed to welcome you. Your sister Mariette is a good, humane, intelligent girl, an excellent musician already, for her age; and Will, though not brilliant, is a kindly fellow, with wits of a slow sort. He is at Westminster School, and friends of mine in town do me the favour to invite him to their houses instead of his father, so he sees a little of Society, and has manners above the schoolboys. You will take to them both. They will look forward to a glad time if you say you are coming. Our cottage can now supply a bedroom, and this is at your disposal for as long as you please. When I was informed of your wishing to throw up your situation at Lille that you might embrace the profession of Literature, I was alarmed. My own mischance in that walk I thought a sufficient warning. But if you come to me I will work with you in my chalet (you will find it a very quiet and pretty study), and we will occupy your leisure to some good purpose. I am allowed the reputation of a tolerable guide in writing and style, and I can certainly help you to produce clear English. You shall share the chalet with me. Here you will be saving instead of wasting

money, at all events. It will in no way be time lost. After all, with some ability, and a small independence just to keep away the wolf, and a not devouring ambition, Literature is the craft one may most honourably love. I do not say to you, try it. I should say the reverse to anyone. But assuming you to be under the obligation to rest, you might place yourself in my hands here with advantage; and leading a quiet life in good air, you would soon, I trust, feel strength return and discern the bent of your powers. Anything is preferable to that perilous alternation of cold market and hot café at Lille. I had no idea of what you were undergoing, or I would have written to you before. No one better than I from hard privation knows the value of money. But health should not be sacrificed to it. I long greatly to see you. I would at once run over to Lille, if I could spare the time. Write to me, and specially of your health, on the day you receive this—a dozen lines, in the case of a press of business. You may rely on my wife's cordial anxiety to see you well and receive you here.—I shall be troubled until I hear from you.—Believe me, ever at heart, your affectionate father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 23, 1881.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—Mariette brought your letter up to my chalet at noon to-day; 'A letter from Arthur, Papa.' She knew I was anxious to hear from you.—On the whole the news rather relieved me, but that I am uncertain whether, with the cessation of the hæmorrhage, the blood-spitting has quite discontinued. If it has, one is allowed to suppose that the evil was done during the last severe winter, under trying conditions,

on a depressed system. I could raise a cry of thankfulness to that strange divinity of Accident, Providence, at your release from those conditions in good time—as I trust it is. I shall be glad when you quit Lille. Your scheme of taking to mountain air is wise, I think; but watch yourself, and should it act unfavourably—as I do not fancy it will—the warmest sea-side air you can get in Europe—Malaga—will be best for you. If, on the other hand, the mountain suits you and you are benefited by the sharp purity of it, one would say that Davos-platz in winter would be preferable to the Riviera, where treacherous winds are at work to undo the restorative sunlight. At Davos-platz you would find Louis Stevenson, a friend of mine, a promising young writer, but latterly struck with weakness of chest. I am told he intends to pass a second winter there. Some invalids are splendidly invigorated by its tonic atmosphere; and if this can be enjoyed, where the malady has not distinctly set in, a rapid cure ensues. Your letter bids me hope, and perhaps it may be, as it seems, that when you have thorough rest and change of scene, sweet air and appetite, you will make new blood, and therewith remake your frame. My thoughts will follow you still anxiously. It is a holiday to me to think of you soon having liberty.

You speak of your income; I am glad it is so much more than Poco told me it was. I feared you would hardly have enough, and dreaded your being forced to go into harness again, without requisite strength. Poco says you understand the management of your money, and that Mr. Mill Williams invests it for you. I should imagine him to be an excellent adviser. In these days I do not like Banks. The American Government Consols please me beyond most investments.—I am to inherit

something from a relative, who is an old lady of 80 and more, and an imbecile, but extremely tenacious of her crazy hold of life; so that I see no holiday before me, and there are chances of my being outlasted. Whether I inherit or not the money goes to my children, so you will have your share.—My health is now far from good. I finished the last volumes of a novel two years back by writing at night for three months. An attack of whooping cough followed on the lowered nerves. I have never been well since then. My digestion is entirely deranged, and still I have to write—and for a public that does not care for my work. Those were the thoughts that used to give me such alarm at your craving to wield the pen. As for me, I have failed, and I find little to make the end undesirable. While I can be of service to my children, I would stay, but no longer. There is nothing saddening about death to a man of my age. But the thought of a child of mine having the prospect of life extinguished in his youth, is a cruel anguish. Hitherto my lungs have worked soundly.—Nothing but the stomach has ever been weak. Unhappily this is a form of weakness that incessant literary composition does not agree with.

As to meeting you on the Continent, I wish I could give myself the anticipation of doing so. It would brighten me. I cannot say yes, but will not yet say decisively no, for it may happen that I shall be able to come. In that case, I suppose the place of meeting would be Strasburg or Basle. You may be sure I would not walk you overmuch. However, for two or three weeks I will not speak of it. Give me early the exact date of your leaving Lille.

It pleases me to hear that you will be with Janet,[1]

[1] Mrs. Ross, who, on leaving Egypt with her husband, had settled on the outskirts of Florence.

probably at the time of vintage in Italy, of which she is enthusiastic. Our dear friend Tom Taylor was there with her one Autumn. We have lost him. I felt the loss keenly. You may not have seen a sonnet[1] I wrote on him in the 'Cornhill Magazine.' Sometimes it used to strike me that writings of mine might fall under your eye. Have you any taste for verse or light literature? There is no harm if not, except that it helps to freshness of style and elegance in graver writings.

We have been long estranged, my dear boy, and I awake from it with a shock that wrings me. The elder should be the first to break through such divisions, for he knows best the tenure and the nature of life. But our last parting gave me the idea that you did not care for me; and further, I am so driven by work that I do not contend with misapprehension of me, or with disregard, but have the habit of taking it from all alike, as a cab-horse takes the whip. Part of me has become torpid. The quality of my work does not degenerate; I can say no more. Only in my branch of the profession of letters the better the work the worse the pay, and also, it seems, the lower the esteem in which one is held for it.

I shall hope to hear from you soon. Writing bent over a desk cannot be good for you, therefore do not write me long letters. A few lines of your state of health will be enough.

We should all have had delight in welcoming you home, but your project is in every way advisable. Try to come to us next year in May or in June, for the Summer.—By the way, when travelling, or anywhere in towns, and where you do not know the wells, avoid the drinking water. In France I take Eau de St. Galmier

[1] 'To a Friend Lost.'

and in Germany the Seltzers :—water of mineral springs. The ordinary water is corrupt—and here as well. Typhoid is a common disease in consequence. Wherever you settle see that your drinking water has been boiled.

I will write again next week.—It will be a grief to me if I cannot meet you. I am in a difficulty with the work I am doing just now and behindhand with it, or I would not hesitate.—Your loving father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

Mariette's kisses are blown to you, and my wife bids me remember her to you affectionately. All of us will be rejoiced by any good tidings of you.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 1881.

MY DEAR FRED,—I did not go to salute the illustrious of this people. Morley went, was introduced, found the P. affable, cordial, simple, etc., and the Crown P. of G. a model of manliness. He says the entertainment was pleasant—good music. It would have required the young-eyed cherubim in full choric response to attract me to London.

I wish, however, that I had chit-chat to enliven your Vichy dulness. I sent you a 'Daily News' containing the correspondence from Merv of the enterprising Donovan, under the supposition that you don't have the paper sent to you regularly in France.—While you are at Vichy read Mdme. de Sévigné's Letters in relation to the place. They are interesting, as indeed she always is. Also a book by Emile Montégut contains an account of Vichy that may point out unobserved things to be admired. I read it in the 'R. des deux Mondes.' It is one of a collection of articles on notable French spots.—

I hope you have had good news of Ivor. Will rowed (at short warning) in the Westminster Eight against the Leander Club the other day, and writes that the training and exercise have made him feel rather giant-like. I have good news of my boy Arthur. He starts for Strasburg on the 1st August, and after a visit there he mounts the Swiss or Tyrolese heights. He begs me to join him, but this I fear won't be possible, or any holiday. I have two Novels in hand, and of one there is a prospect for the Cornhill. Perhaps it will be the duller for my dulness, but I can't help that. I have been writing much verse.—As to health, not vastly improved. The sameness of our animal life here would counteract the sweet specifics. Present my respects and remembrances to your Mother, and write to me again. By the way, Bradlaugh threatens to be foolish. The House is wrong, but this will make two false steps on his part, and the unit against the aggregate cannot afford one. The folly is to take strong measures upon no popular sentiment to back him.—
Yours warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 27, 1881.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—I have gone through the abstract of your essay with an awakened interest. It is deeply thought, ingenious (in the best sense), and sets me looking for a complete work. With most of the statements I can agree. I myself am, as a describer of nature and natural emotions, a constant sufferer in dealing with a language part of which is dead matter.—You will do good service in directing attention to the point, though I do not see how our English is to be vitalized throughout.

—I fancy still that you are in danger of overlooking the large admixture of Celtic blood in the English race. Irish and Cambrian have a portion of them under that banner.—But this does not affect your argument, but strengthens it if you succeed in showing to satisfaction that the English manifest themselves Teutonly. As far as I observe them, the heart of the nation is Teuton and moral, and therewith intellectually obtuse, next to speechless. It has, however, a shifty element, and a poetic: and this tells again for you, that the poetic, seeming to come from our Celtic blood, flies at once to the well-springs of the tongue whenever it is in need of vital imagery.—I wish I had time to discuss it. I am hard driven.

Whether I can come to you hangs doubtful. I am half bound to work for the 'Cornhill'; and as I am unpopular I am ill-paid, and therefore bound to work double tides, hardly ever able to lay down the pen. This affects my weakened stomach, and so the round of the vicious circle is looped. I will come—be sure, if I find it prudently possible. The course I should like would be to Munich, Innsbruck, over the Brenner to one of the heights in view of the Dolomites and thence around. At Primiero or San Martino excellent quarters may be had, and I long for Italian colour with mountain air. Yet I could not enjoy it under pressure of work to finish or a holiday stolen; I have lost my old buoyancy.—Keep me informed of your whereabouts and your route. Pray do not tax your strength or expose yourself to night air in travelling, if avoidable. In a couple of months precautions may not be so necessary.—Here at home I am urged to join you, and it is no fault of the family that I am not off at once. The time for starting would be toward the latter end of August 20-25th. But to preclude

disappointment, rather think that you will not see me than that you will.

What do you say to sitting down in the winter on the Riviera to write a brief sketch of your essay in a couple of papers for the 'Fortnightly Review'? I can guarantee that Mr. Morley would give due attention to any work from a son of mine, and in the 'Fortnightly' it would have the choicest circle of readers. Subsequently, you could enlarge it for publication in a volume.—I believe that at Mentone a Dr. George Macdonald [1] lives, a writer of mark, to whom an introduction could be got for you.—Perhaps if the Autumn is denied to me, I might have a taste of the Riviera in the winter. I was there the year before last in September. Adieu. My warmest wishes and prayers are with you.—Your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 5, 1881.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—By this post I have sent you a 'Fortnightly Review' containing an article by Grant Allen, a writer of some distinction, upon the English race. He thinks that Celtic blood preponderates. I do not, though I see it flooding. To mix among people is to have another lesson by experience.—However, the essay may be of use to you.

I rejoice that you have flown, and am as glad of your release as if I had personally risen singing on the free air. It pleases me to think of your visiting old Stuttgart and meditating on youthful impressions there. I remember regretting your aversion to Berne; for we lose the proper sense of the richness of life if we do not look

[1] Author of *At the Back of the North Wind, Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*, etc.

back on scenes of our youth with imaginative warmth.—There are several ways, all attractive, of entering Tyrol from the basis of little Constance. Either by Munich and Innsbrück, or from Bregenz over the Vorarlberg and down to Stanger Thal to Landeck—which you may not have quite forgotten, or taking the rail from Lindau to Kempten, through Reutte and Lermoos to Nassereith in the Oberinnthal, a day's walk from Innsbrück, whence over the Brenner to Bozen, where you command routes to the Dolomites, the loveliest scenes in Europe. Should you (and I not with you) go to Cortina d'Ampezzo, you will probably meet a neighbour of mine living in a big house on Mickleham Downs—a Mr. Dixon. His two daughters are with him; very amiable, rather shy, intelligent. He is an enthusiastic traveller in Italy and the Alps of old date. He recommended San Martino—half a day from Cortina or more—to me if I should be able to come. I begin to have a touch of despair, my work gets on so slowly, and I must hand in a certain quantity by the end of October. If not this Autumn, I may be at liberty for a run to the Riviera in the winter. But I dare not project. The Fates have destined me for a cab-horse, and I find myself getting the jogging soul as well as the pace over everlasting sameness.—Give my warm regards to your hostess, my compliments to her husband. A trip to the Vosges offers good prospects for walking. I know only the kind of scenery. Communicate with me as you proceed, but let the wish be subordinate to your leisure.—By the way, did I tell you of my receiving a letter from one signing himself Guglielmo Meredith Read Cabral, claiming me for his cousin? He writes from Lisbon. His sister married Costa Cabral formerly Prime Minister, now Marchese and Ambassador of Portugal at Rome. I knew of them. It seems that Madame Cabral